

Veritas



This *Veritas* and the next 'spectrum' issue contain articles 'bumped' to accommodate a six-month moratorium on current operations articles. It was explained in the last "Azimuth." The special 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) 'Night Stalker' edition is on indefinite 'hold' pending release of a USASOAC Security Classification Guide.

Articles cover ARSOF legacy unit history from WWII to the present. Regrettably, the initial article is an Errata covering a 1st Special Forces Group (SFG) Security Assistance Force Asia (SAF Asia) mission to the Philippines in 1972. Shortly after President Richard M. Nixon announced his policy of "Vietnamization" in November 1969, the Special Action Force Asia became the Security Assistance Force Asia (no change of acronym). This change supported the Government of South Vietnam assuming full responsibility for fighting the war against the Communists. Keeping veterans involved throughout the process of producing an article is an inviolable axiom for the USASOC historians.

The first operational mission tasked to 10th SFG by U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR), was a humanitarian rescue in the Congo Republic (July 1960). A Special Forces (SF) team coordinated the light aircraft rescues of over 300 American and foreign missionaries, doctors, dentists, and nurses working deep in the Congo bush. This is followed by a discussion of the innovative, cheap training done by the 3rd Battalion, 5th SFG in the early post-Vietnam 1970s when personnel reductions-in-force (RIFs) and budget cuts plagued SF. Discovery that the Japanese had massacred Allied prisoners of war at Palawan shortly after the Leyte landings shocked Southwest Pacific Command. General of the Army Douglas A. MacArthur quickly made prison camp rescues a top priority.

The requirement to counter Pathet Lao propaganda during the early 1960s was the first 'real world' Psychological Operations (PSYOP) mission since the Korean War. The history and symbolism connected to the 'Centaur' statue guarding the front of the USASOAC headquarters precedes a revelatory 'Special Forces Operator Code' dated 1959. This 'operator' code pledge predates special operations forces (SOF) claims by almost twenty years.

The highly praised, well-received ARSOA History Handbook has 'raised the bar' for ARSOF functional branch history handbooks. It followed the PSYOP and Civil Affairs (CA) handbooks. A special thanks goes to all veterans who make ARSOF history personal. CHB

USASOC HISTORY OFFICE

Command Historian & Editor

Charles H. Briscoe, PhD
910-432-3732 / briscoec@socom.mil

Deputy Command Historian & Associate Editor

Michael E. Krivdo, PhD
910-908-0939 / michael.krivdo@socom.mil

Associate Editors

Troy J. Sacquety, PhD
910-432-9324 / sacquett@socom.mil

Jared M. Tracy, PhD
910-396-5906 / jared.tracy@socom.mil

Joshua D. Esposito, PhD
910-432-5349 / joshua.esposito@socom.mil

Robert D. Seals
910-432-9780 / robert.seals@socom.mil

Design

Daniel W. Telles
Art Director / tellesd@socom.mil

Laura Goddard
Designer / laura.goddard@socom.mil

Mariano Santillan
Illustrator / mariano@santillan.cc

Veritas: *Veritas* is published by the United States Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina (ISSN 1553-9830). The contents are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, USSOCOM, or USASOC. The contents are compiled, edited, and prepared by the USASOC History Office. All photos not credited are courtesy of the USASOC History Office.

Copyright: Material in *Veritas* may be reprinted, except where copyrighted, provided credit is given to *Veritas* and the creators.

Copies: Copies of previous *Veritas* issues are no longer available. A limited number of the current issue is maintained at the USASOC History Office.

Permission to Reprint: Reprinting well-received *Veritas* articles in a modified version and/or without the documentation (endnotes) degrades serious historical scholarship. If this professional courtesy cannot be accorded, requests will be denied. Permission to use photographs from private collections was granted only to the USASOC History Office. These photos, like the illustrative sketches, customized maps, and schematics used in *Veritas* articles are NOT available for public use.

Questions: Address questions and comments to **USASOC, ATTN: AOHS Veritas, E-2929 Desert Storm Drive, Fort Bragg, NC 28310**, or e-mail one of our editors.

Firewalls and Spam Filters: DOD computer firewalls routinely place unrecognized addresses into a Junk E-Mail box. Encryption is another problem. Personal computer spam blockers further delay and negate responses. Therefore, if you would like your e-mail answered, please adjust your personal spam blocker before you send a message. Thanks.

Subscriptions: Those wishing to subscribe to *Veritas*, should write to **USASOC, ATTN: AOHS Veritas (Mr. Seals), E-2929 Desert Storm Drive, Fort Bragg, NC 28310**, or e-mail Mr. Seals at **robert.seals@socom.mil**. Please include affiliation to Army Special Operations or list any applicable military service. This helps us build a support network for future *Veritas* articles. If you send an email and do not receive a response, it is likely because firewalls or spam filters are being constantly upgraded. If this is the case please assume that we did not get your message.



CONTENTS

Azimuth

By Charles H. Briscoe

1 Errata & Addenda

for "Special Action Force Asia"

By Charles H. Briscoe

6 Congo Rescue, 1960

By Charles H. Briscoe

25 Training on a Shoestring

Cheap, Practical SF Training in the Post-Vietnam Turmoil

By Charles H. Briscoe

35 Catalyst for Action

The Palawan Massacre

By Michael E. Krivdo

42 Shoot and Salute

U.S. Army Special Warfare in Laos

By Jared M. Tracy

55 Volare Optimos

Honoring the Silent Professionals of Special Operations Aviation

By Joshua D. Esposito

63 Creed of the Special Forces Operator

By Charles H. Briscoe

COVER: The Mayor of Malasiqui, Luzon, Philippines, and two other Philippine guerrillas raise the American flag on 18 January 1945. The townspeople had hidden the flag for three years during the Japanese occupation. It was raised when American forces returned. (*Army Signal Corp Photo*)

ERRATA: VERITAS Issue 12, No. 2: CJSOTF article, page 9, the shift of responsibility for combat operations took place on 1 June 2002, not 1 June 2001 as previously printed.

ERRATA & ADDENDA for "Special Action Force Asia"

by Charles H. Briscoe

Adverse reactions from 1st Special Forces Group (SFG) veterans who 'lived' the Special Action Force (SAF) and Security Assistance Force Asia (SAF Asia) prompted this errata article and addenda. This could have been avoided if the USASOC History Office protocol had been followed by the original author. It is courtesy to submit draft articles to all quoted veterans for review, comment, and suggested fixes. Keeping the veterans involved from start to published product sustains their interest and continued support. The history is theirs, not ours. Thankfully, Army Special Operation Forces (ARSOF) veterans do not hesitate to speak up.

The purpose of this short article is to correct the errors in "Special Action Force Asia" in *Veritas*, Vol 13/No 1 (2017). It clarifies the origin and nucleus shift for the Disaster Assistance Relief Teams (DART). The switch from Special Action Force Asia to Security Assistance Force Asia was directly linked to the U.S. military drawdown in Vietnam and commensurate reduction of the American presence in Southeast Asia (SEA). Highlighting the successes of the SAF Asia DART Task Force in the Philippines in July 1972 will show how postwar adjustment to Foreign Internal Defense (FID) restored substance to the 1st SFG mission in the Pacific. The issues raised by veterans will be addressed in order.

First

The title should have been "Special Action Force Asia – 'Security Assistance' Force Asia" because the definition of 'SAF' was subtly changed after President Richard M. Nixon announced his policy of "Vietnamization" in November 1969. U.S. military forces would be reduced starting in 1970. Responsibility for fighting the war against the Communists would be transferred completely to South Vietnam.

The Senior Officer Debriefing Reports of Colonels (COL) John P. Geraci (14 August 1971–6 July 1973) and Elliott P. Sydnor, Jr. (6 July 1973–30 June 1974) specifically refer to SAF Asia as Security Assistance Force Asia.¹ The change of designation from Special Action Force Asia to Security Assistance Force Asia went largely unnoticed at battalion according to retired COL Jerry M. King, the B Company and 2nd Battalion commander until June 1973, and retired Sergeant Major (SGM) Harold Jacobson, C Company, 1st SFG until April 1972.²

Second

In their debriefing reports Colonels Geraci and Sydnor detailed these points which were misrepresented or absent in the schematic, "Special Action Force Asia" on page 3:

- » 1st SFG consisted of two SF battalions and a Support Battalion (A and B Companies became 1st and 2nd Battalion respectively, and C Company went away between April 1972 and 6 July 1973).³ 10th SFG was also down to two SF battalions in 1972.⁴
- » 1st Civil Affairs Battalion replaced the 97th CA Group (CAG).
- » 156th Medical Detachment was no longer assigned.
- » All other augmentation detachments remained the same.⁵

The two group commanders also emphasized that post-Vietnam reductions-in-force (RIF) impacted the ranks of combat-experienced captains and majors hardest; forming a third SF battalion was not viable. Additionally, the Army's plan to deactivate 1st SFG adversely affected the assignment of school-trained SF and CA officer replacements. To fill that void, COL Sydnor conducted an internal SF Officers Course.⁶

Third

The U.S. Army revised its campaign strategy [counterinsurgency (COIN)] in South Vietnam shortly after 5th SFG left country (March 1971). Foreign Internal Defense (FID) became the basis for the subsequent campaigns collectively labeled 'Consolidation.' Since twelve COIN campaigns had not defeated Communism in Vietnam, that acronym was deleted from the Army lexicon.⁷ Security assistance, a critical element of FID, would be discussed in forthcoming SF doctrine.

Fourth

Army Training Circular (TC) 31-20-1, *The Role of U.S. Army Special Forces*, 22 October 1976, officially changed the doctrinal meaning of SAF: "An SFG augmented as required with civil affairs, psychological operations, military intelligence, medical, military police, engineer, and Army Security Agency elements, possesses the highly specialized skills needed to assist a host country to develop internal defense. An SFG so augmented would be called a **security assistance force (SAF)** (*sic*)."⁸ Field Manual (FM) 31-20, *Doctrine for Special Forces Operations*, April 1990, stated that "Internal defense and development (IDAD) is an overall strategy for preventing or defeating an insurgency... Successful IDAD programs eliminate problems before an insurgency can exploit them."⁹ This was further clarified: "The primary SF mission in FID is to organize, train, advise, and assist host nation (HN) military and paramilitary forces. The intent is to improve the tactical and technical proficiency of these forces" **so they can defeat the insurgency without direct US involvement.**¹⁰

Fifth

C Company and the 1st SFG 'Resident Detachments' on Taiwan and in Korea were left out of the "Special Action Force Asia" schematic without explanation. In retrospect the wire diagram should have been omitted as well as the map, "1st SFG (A) Unit Locations on Okinawa 1956-1974." The two graphics spanned critical transition periods that were affected by unit relocations, significant military RIFs that followed American withdrawal from Vietnam (unit deactivations, augmentation downsizing and manpower under arms), and the conversion of SF Companies [commanded by Lieutenant Colonels (LTCs)] to Army Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN) board-selected battalion commanders in 1971.¹¹ The two schematics confused rather than clarified.

That said, there was a C Company in 1st SFG at least until April 1972. Its Self-contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA) detachment, ODA-323, worked closely with the 97th CAG to survey harbors of four offshore islands surrounding Okinawa (Iheya-Jima, Kume-Jima, Aguni-Jima, and Yonaguni-Jima). The SCUBA team explosively removed coral formations to assure safe navigation in

and out of the harbors of the first three. A lack of industry on Yonaguni-Jima negated any coral destruction in that island harbor.¹²

As part of the deactivation of 1st SFG and SAF Asia, the 'Resident SF Detachment' on Taiwan was eliminated. The 'Resident SF Detachment' in Korea was reassigned to Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA). The SAF Asia coordinator (Civil Affairs) TDY in the Philippines at the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) was terminated.¹³ The elimination of its 'Advisory' role reduced JUSMAG to JUSMAG.

Sixth

The statement on page 4, "Even though the 1st SFG continued to send ODAs to Vietnam during the 1960s to support the 5th SFG (A), it also deployed SAF teams throughout the rest of Asia to confront the noncombat elements of counterinsurgency" should have read, "While 1st SFG sent ODAs on temporary duty (TDY) to Laos and Vietnam in the early 1960s, it deployed SAF teams throughout Asia."¹⁴ 1st SFG augmented 5th SFG in Vietnam with TDY ODAs during the war. Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) went to South Vietnam in 1972 [CG (Friday Gap)] and [1-73 (Task Force MADDEN)] after 5th SFG had departed.¹⁵ 1st SFG was supposed to augment Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) search and recovery teams working throughout SEA when requested.¹⁶

Seventh

Retired SGM [not Master Sergeant (MSG)] Harold 'Jake' Jacobson rotated from Okinawa before the task force DART teams went into the Philippines in July 1972. He read the After Action Reports (AARs) later.¹⁷ The Pakistan mission in June 1971 was the last major DART organized and directed by the Civil Affairs unit augmenting SAF Asia.

Lastly

DART operations in the Pacific region directed by Special Forces proved to be significant 'enablers' that restored the SF reputation after the Vietnam War and helped to regain access and placement for training. While civic assistance had always been 'meat and potatoes' for the 97th CAG, SF had relinquished its SAF Asia leadership responsibility as its warfighting role in SEA dissipated.¹⁸ This was one of several problems facing LTC King when he returned to Okinawa to command in late 1970:

"Colonel (COL) Charles M. Simpson, the 1st SFG commander, called me up to the headquarters in January 1971. He was concerned that SF had lost ready access to most Pacific countries. As the company/battalion commander who had reported his ODAs as not operationally ready because they were being gutted to support civic action projects



The provinces assigned to the 1st SFG TF DART were Pangasinan, Tarlac, and Pampanga on Luzon. Northwest of Manila, two abut large bodies of water—Lingayen Gulf and Manila Bay.

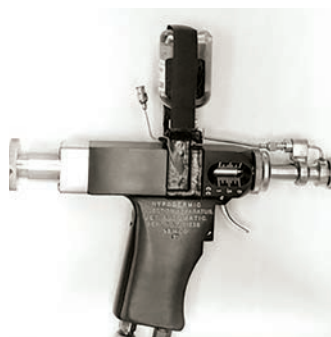
*arranged by the SAF augmentation elements, I got the task. I was told to find a way to reestablish SF presence throughout the region. Whatever we did in a country had to make us welcomed back. I knew that by simply following our doctrine SF could get 'back in the driver's seat.' I recommended making SF 'supported' instead of 'supporting.' With SF in charge of the DARTs doors could be reopened for training."*¹⁹

Typhoon Rita, which roamed the Western Pacific for a record-setting 22 days (5–27 July 1972), facilitated that changeover. Although its eye remained well away from the Philippines, massive circulatory winds increased the volume of monsoon rains over Luzon for several days. Two feet of rain fell on 17 July alone. Two hundred people were already dead and more than 2 million were left homeless in the countryside.²⁰ The JUSMAG Philippines in Manila asked the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) in Hawaii for help on 20 July 1972.²¹

Because the disaster covered an immense area, COL John P. Geraci alerted LTC King, the 2nd Battalion commander, to deploy a DART Task Force (TF) to the Philippines. A DART command and control headquarters to coordinate its six team efforts was to co-locate with the Air Force operations center on Clark Air Base (AB). Since it was the top PACOM priority, six Far East-based C-130 *Hercules* transports were so rapidly assembled at Kadena AFB, Okinawa, that the DART advance echelon (ADVON) simply boarded the lead airplane. Ten hours later, TF DART from SAF Asia was on the ground.²²

TF DART, under the staff supervision of U.S. Navy Captain Clark (no first name and middle initial available) from PACOM, was to assist the Republic of the Philippines government with humanitarian relief operations in heavily flooded Pangasinan, Tarlac, and Pampanga provinces. Extending in a wide swath northwest of Manila, two of the provinces abutted large tidal basins—Lingayen Gulf and Manila Bay—that exacerbated flooding. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was a close coordinating partner.²³

The top priority tasks set by the Philippine government were lifesaving and helicopter medical evacuations. These tasks were expanded to the distribution of food and relief supplies, inoculations to prevent cholera, typhoid fever, and waterborne diseases, and general medical treatment. The DART's rubber inflatable boats were augmented by local assets. Air Force helicopters at Clark AB and Marine helicopters from the USS *Tripoli*, a helicopter amphibious landing ship at Subic Naval Base, were made available. Every day Marines loaded food, water, and supplies aboard helicopters and the Landing Ship, Tank (LST) USS *Cayuga* and the HMS *Lincoln* for delivery or airdrop. TF DART brought a portable automatic jet hypodermic injection apparatus for mass inoculations.²⁴



The Automatic Jet Hypodermic Injection Apparatus or 'Jetgun' was state-of-the-art for mass inoculations to prevent epidemics during crises. It was regularly used to inoculate basic recruits of all U.S. military services well into the 1990s.

Six forward bases were established after LTC King and his teams conducted aerial and ground reconnaissance. The DARTs quickly split internally to cover more territory and expand their radio net.²⁵ As during any crisis, viable information was the key to managing and shifting resources—from boats to helicopters to medical teams.²⁶ “President Ferdinand E. Marcos, who visited almost daily, advised me early on to verify reports from the provincial governors because they were often highly exaggerated. The SF teams had to sort out reality. The folks in rural areas were told to display white flags if food was needed and black flags for medical support,” recalled King. “And, it never stopped raining. Thirty inches alone fell while we were there.”²⁷ Rescue and treatment of those stranded raised the need for food and fresh water. Unlike today, bottled water was a luxury for the wealthy in 1972. Engineer units purified water.

USAID modified the recipe of a popular meat-filled, steam-cooked bun called *siopao* to provide healthy food to the homeless. Bakeries all over Manila and on the U.S. military bases produced hamburger-stuffed rolls fortified with fish meal nutrients and other proteins. Millions of these ‘nutri-buns,’ sealed in watertight family-size plastic bags, were delivered or air dropped into water-soaked fields near the forward DART bases. The local village leaders daily reported food and fresh water needs and were supposed to arrange distribution when alerted that aircraft and/or boats were inbound.²⁸ While all five priorities were addressed simultaneously, lifesaving trumped everything.

TF DART successfully orchestrated the combined humanitarian relief effort because of the teams’ “ability to organize, direct, and advise others...within their areas.”²⁹ Using 1st SFG rubber boats, local watercraft, and Air Force and Marine helicopters nearly 3,000 people were rescued from rooftops and destroyed rural hamlets and evacuated to temporary refugee centers. The TF headquarters coordinated distribution of more than 500 tons of food. Medical treatment was given another 23,070 patients beyond those 375,926 personnel inoculated for cholera and typhoid fever by combined US/Filipino medical teams. The local doctors, nurses, and medical students were trained to use the state-of-the-art Automatic Jet Hypodermic Injection System to reduce the possibility of epidemics.³⁰ The orchestration of this huge humanitarian relief effort was accomplished by 123 SAF Asia personnel in less than 30 days.

Brigadier General (BG) James A. Grimsley, Jr., Chief of Mission, JUSMAG Philippines, said it best: “The training, organization, and professionalism of the SAFASIA personnel were immediately apparent to senior U.S. military personnel, their AFP (Armed Forces Philippines) counterparts and Filipino government officials...The DART TF has been more than justified, both in their contributions at a time of critical need for humanitarian purposes and in enhancing, in a most positive way, the professional image



(L to R) LTC Jerry M. King, 2nd Bn, 1st SFG and TF DART commander, 2/1st SF Bn SGM John T. Lockhart, and a USAF helicopter pilot confirm supply delivery points. A USMC rifle company supervised by SGM Lockhart loaded food and supplies aboard helicopters every day.

of the U.S. military. The best interests of the U.S. Army Pacific have been advanced by the SAF Asia DART Task Force from Okinawa.”³¹ BG Grimsley added that President Marcos and his wife, Imelda, praised the organization and effectiveness of the DART.³²

The 123 members of the SAF Asia DART Task Force were awarded the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation for the humanitarian assistance in July and August 1972.³³ “Our success in the Philippines restored SF as the ‘lead’ for future DART missions,” stated COL King. “The SF rebuilt a positive image regionally. Our DART rehearsal project on Taiwan performed the month before paid big dividends.”³⁴

The USASOC History Office regrets that the original SAF ASIA article was incomplete, misleading, and begged further questions. Circulation of draft *Veritas* articles amongst veterans who contributed is now on our internal review checklist. Special thanks go to those who ‘fired red star clusters’ concerning the original article. Credibility goes hand-in-hand with our journal title, *Veritas*. ↑

CHARLES H. BRISCOE, PhD

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations in Latin America, the Congo, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

- 1 Department of the Army (DA), HQ, Security Assistance Force Asia (SAF Asia) , 1st Special Forces Group (1st SFG) [Airborne (Abn)], 1st Special Forces (SF) APO San Francisco (SF) 96331, SUBJECTS: Senior Officer Debriefing Report (Colonel John P. Geraci) RCS CSFOR-74 dated 29 June 1973 and Senior Officer Debriefing Report (Colonel Elliott P. Sydnor, Jr.) dated 9 July 1974 hereafter cited as SODR with name and page number.
- 2 Email, retired COL Jerry M. King to Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, SUBJECT: Special Action versus Security Assistance Force, 24 October 2017, Classified Files, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; email, retired SGM Harold 'Jake' Jacobson to Briscoe, SUBJECT: Special Action versus Security Assistance Force, 24 October 2017, Classified Files, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by email, sender, and date.
- 3 SODR-Geraci, 9; SODR-Sydnor, 2.
- 4 Retired MG James A. Guest, 7 June 2017, interview by Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. U.S. Continental Army Command (CONARC) reactivated D Company, 1st SFG on 15 April 1966 at Ft Bragg, NC, for duty in Thailand. The unit flew directly from Pope Air Force Base (PAFB), NC, in October 1966. It was deactivated and reactivated as 46th Company at Lop Puri on 10 April 1967 by U.S. Army, Pacific (USARPAC). On 3 March 1972, 46th Company became 3rd Bn, 1st SFG before deactivation at Fort Bragg, NC on 3 March 1974. Stephen Sherman, interview by Briscoe, 12 December 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Ft Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 5 SODR-Geraci, 11; SODR-Sydnor, 7, 9.
- 6 SODR-Geraci, 11; SODR-Sydnor, 7, 9.
- 7 DA. U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), "Listing of the Campaigns of the U.S. Army Displayed on the Army Flag" at <https://history.army.mil/html/reference/campaigns.html> accessed 11/17/2017. As late as 2010 General Martin E. Dempsey, the Training and Doctrine (TRADOC) Commander (later Chief of Staff, Army and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff) condemned the use of COIN. The term defined an Army task in terms of a type of enemy, rather than describing something that the Army does affirmatively. Spencer Ackerman, "Army Brains: Kill Power Point, 'Counterinsurgency'" at <https://www.wired.com/2010/09/army-brains-kill-powerpoint-counterinsurgency> accessed 10/24/2017.
- 8 HQ, DA Training Circular (TC) 31-20-1 *The Role of U.S. Army Special Forces* (22 October 1976), 30.
- 9 HQ, DA Field Manual (FM) 31-20 *Doctrine for Special Forces Operations* (April 1990), 10-1.
- 10 HQ, DA, FM 31-20, 10-2; Ironically, FM 31-22 *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces* (November 1963) that detailed the Special Action Force (SAF) concept, was the last counterinsurgency manual published during President John F. Kennedy's three-year administration. In the first year of the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, the Army published one major counterinsurgency work—FM 100-20 *Field Service Regulations* (1964). Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, DC: US Army CMH, 2006), 249.
- 11 King, 39 March and 5 May 2016 interviews by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 12 Jacobson, email to Eugene Piasecki, Subject: Veritas dated 3 September 2017; Jacobson letter to Briscoe, subject: Company C, dated 11 September 2017.
- 13 SODR-Sydnor, 15.
- 14 Jacobson, email to Piasecki, Subject: Veritas dated 3 September 2017.
- 15 Company 'D', 5th SFG (Abn), 1st SF, APO San Francisco (SF) 96215, SUBJECT: TDY After Action Report dated 7 March 1967; HQ, 97th CA Group, 1st SFG (Abn), 1st SF, APO SF 96331, SUBJECT: After-Action Report, Special Action Force Asia Civic Action Project Tokashiki-Zamani dated 16 May 1967; HQ, SAFASIA, 1st SFG (Abn), 1st SF, APO SF 96331, SUBJECT: Civic Action After-Action Report dated 8 November 1967; SODR-Geraci, 7; Richard K. Kolb, "Last Days of the Infantry in Vietnam, 1972," *VFW Magazine* (August 2012) at http://digitaledition.qwinc.com/display_article.php?id=1112161 accessed 11/17/2017.
- 16 King interviews, 29 March and 5 May 2016.
- 17 Jacobson, email to Piasecki, Subject: Veritas dated 3 September 2017; Jacobson letter to Briscoe, SUBJECT: Company C, dated 11 September 2017.
- 18 King interview, 5 May 2016.
- 19 King interviews, 5 May 2016 and 28 September 2017.
- 20 "Typhoon Rita Causes Extensive Flooding in Philippines," *NBC Evening News*, Sunday, July 23, 1972 at <https://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/broadcasts/465233> accessed 11/16/2017.
- 21 DA. Task Force DART Philippines Report, SUBJECT: Summary from DART TF dated 13 August 1972 USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as DART Philippines Summary. The 374th Tactical Airlift Wing at Ching Chuan Kang Airbase on Taiwan flew the mission. "Typhoon Cleanup Mission: DART Teams on Target in Luzon," *Army Times (Pacific)*, 13 September 1972, 23-24.
- 22 DART Philippines Summary. The 374th Tactical Airlift Wing at Ching Chuan Kang Airbase on Taiwan flew the mission. "Typhoon Cleanup Mission: DART Teams on Target in Luzon," *Army Times (Pacific)*, 13 September 1972, 23-24.
- 23 DART Philippines Summary.
- 24 DART Philippines Summary; Technical Manual (TM) 8-230 *Handbook of Basic Nursing* (Washington, DC: Army Medical Department, November 1970), 6-27.
- 25 King interview, 5 May 2016. More than half of the 1st SFG signal assets were dedicated to TF DART.
- 26 DART Philippines Summary; "Typhoon Cleanup Mission," *Army Times (Pacific)*, 13 September 1972, 23-24. TF DART was reinforced with an additional DART team and more augmentation. By 1 August the total strength of the SAF Asia task force in the Philippines was 123 personnel.
- 27 King interview, 28 September 2017.
- 28 "Typhoon Cleanup Mission," *Army Times (Pacific)*, 13 September 1972, 23-24; Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 187.
- 29 DART Philippines Summary; King interview, 28 September 2017.
- 30 King interview 5 May 2016; President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr. attached the staff and students at the Medical School, University of the Philippines, to TF DART. DART Philippines Summary; CHJUSMAG PHIL Message SUBJECT: Disaster Assistance Relief Team (DART) Operations, Republic of the Philippines to CINCUSARPAC/GPCC/Honolulu, Hawaii dated 310710Z Jul 73; TM 8-230 *Army Medical Department Handbook of Basic Nursing*, 6-27. A Jet Hypodermic Injection System was transferred to the Philippine Army after the TF DART mission ended in August 1972.
- 31 CHJUSMAG PHIL Msg, SUBJECT: DART Operations, Republic of the Philippines to CINCUSARPAC/GPCC/Honolulu, Hawaii dated 310710Z Jul 73.
- 32 CHJUSMAG PHIL Msg, SUBJECT: DART Operations, Republic of the Philippines to CINCUSARPAC/GPCC/Honolulu, Hawaii dated 310710Z Jul 73.
- 33 King interview, 5 May 2016.
- 34 King, interviews, 5 May 2016 and 28 September 2017.

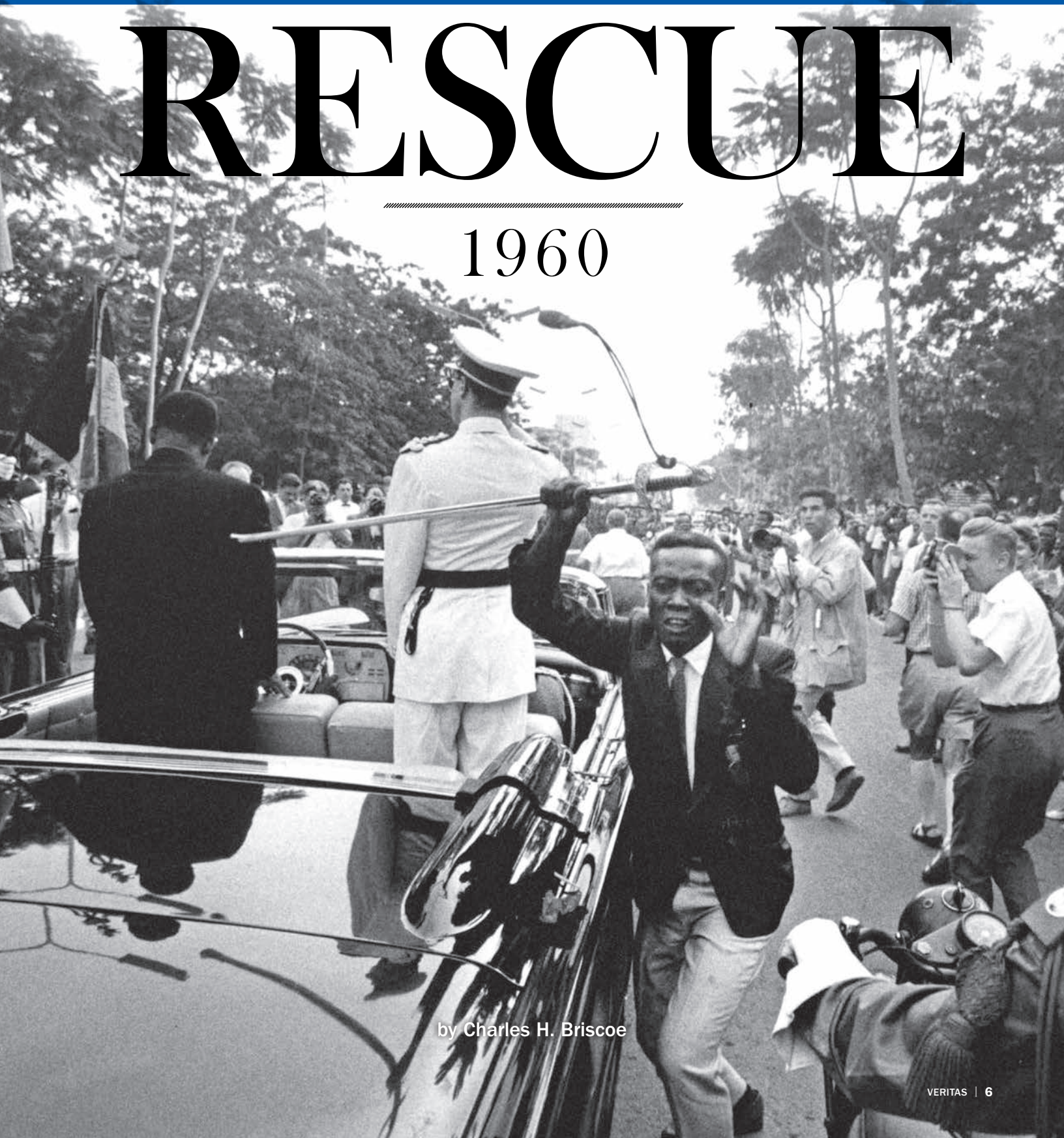
SGM John T. Lockhart helps a young girl board an Air Force helicopter for evacuation to Clark Air Base to be reunited with her parents. All had been stranded by the flooding.



CONGO

RESCUE

1960



by Charles H. Briscoe

In the wake of independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960, law and order collapsed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The *Force Publique* mutinied on 8 July, the two richest mining provinces, Katanga and Kasai seceded (July and August respectively), and tribal strength trials among government leaders never stopped.¹ Mistrust, suspicion, and bitterness towards Belgians grew daily among the Congolese tribal factions and political groups.² White Europeans became targets for racial attacks and a panic-stricken exodus began. In response, the Belgian government convinced *Sabena World Airlines* to divert aircraft to evacuate its citizens from the Congo.³ To support that internationally maligned effort, a U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) aviation task force (TF), clandestinely directed by three Special Forces (SF) soldiers, rescued 239 American and foreign missionaries, doctors, and nurses from rural areas experiencing rampant lawlessness.⁴ Mission success can be attributed to the timelessness of SF operational capabilities and flexibility in adapting to rapidly changing situations.

The purpose of this article is to detail a formerly sensitive, classified rescue mission that was conducted by 10th SF Group (SFG) in July 1960.⁶ It was the first operational tasking given to SF by U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR), a service command of USEUCOM which was dominated by heavy conventional forces (armor, mechanized infantry, and armored cavalry). Its success demonstrated the ‘value added’ of Special Forces to the command, and reminded North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partner nations of their capabilities. The U.S. Air Force overt airlift of refugees, UN peacekeeping forces, food, equipment and medical supplies has long garnered the most publicity.⁷

To understand what prompted this 10th SFG-led humanitarian rescue mission, some pre-independence

background and key facts and figures on society, politics, and economic factors are necessary. Maps, charts, and sidebars cover geography, concurrent world events, population, tribal groups, religious distribution, and identify key Congolese politicians: Patrice E. Lumumba; Antoine Gizenga; Joseph Kasavubu; Joseph D. Mobutu; and Moïse K. Tshombe. The reader must bear in mind that activities in Africa moved quickly in the early 1960s. Current status one day was history two days later, especially in the political and social arenas of this very turbulent period.⁸ Hence, period sources are used for context. This article is divided into four sections: Post-Independence, which provides the background; the Special Forces Mission; an Epilogue summarizes the first two years after UN intervention; and the Postscript discusses awards, post-operation security constraints, and rationale behind the SF success in 1960.

Post-Independence in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Violent racial-economic riots broke out in Leopoldville, the capital of the Belgian Congo, in January 1959. This upheaval preceded internal tribal fighting in Kasai province that spread to the capital in May 1960. Belgium’s inability to resolve these problems reinforced anti-colonial attitudes in America and the United Nations. These dilemmas prompted young King Baudouin I to accelerate the transition to independence of their African colony.⁹ While the world media heralded nationalism with independence, tribal blocs in the Congo defined politics. Since no tribe had a majority, their political leaders vied for key government positions. Simultaneously, newly-elected legislators voted themselves pay raises and health benefits



TITLE PAGE: A Congolese named Ambroise Boimbo stole King Baudouin’s sword as the automobile cavalcade of dignitaries moved through Leopoldville for the Independence Ceremony. Among African tribes the act of stealing an enemy’s weapon was the ultimate insult associated with defeat.

“Almost all Europeans in the Congo at this time were apprehensive if not alarmed; though many of us felt that some troubles and minor incidents were bound to occur, a general racial struggle was not foreseen.”

– Alan P. Merriam, *Congo: Background of Conflict* (1961)⁵

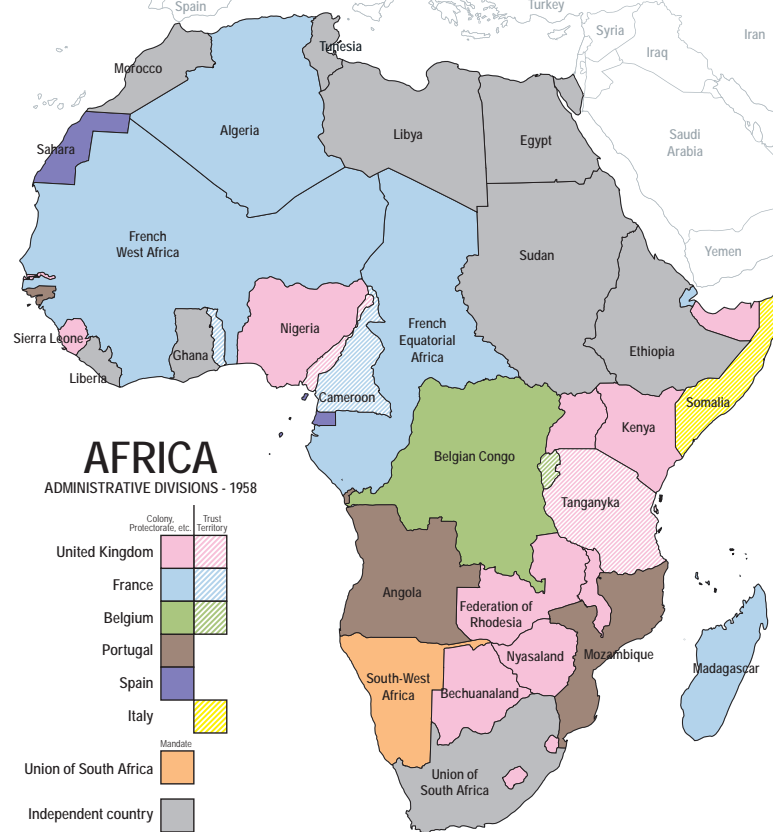
with little concern for the state's financial solvency. A four-day holiday to celebrate independence was approved unanimously. These were heady times for Congolese. Dreamlike expectations were the norm.

The *U.S. News & World Report* correspondent on the scene, David Reed, described the situation: "When the blacks took over from the Belgian colonial administrators, they were far from ready to govern. African officials suddenly were big shots, rode around in fancy cars, and took over elaborate homes. In short, they replaced a white aristocracy with a black aristocracy. When the African soldiers of the Belgian-officered *Force Publique* saw what was happening, they wanted their share. The Premier (Patrice Lumumba) did not deliver his pre-independence promises. The troops went crazy and turned on whites to vent their frustration and rage."¹⁰ The three-man International Staff team from that news magazine repeated the same observations in the 8 August 1960 issue. As authority broke down, senior white civil servants who knew how to make the government operate panicked and ran for their lives. When white business directors, industry managers, and technicians followed suit, the economy collapsed.¹¹

In reality, the May elections fractured the Congo by exposing the ethno-political strength of the native tribes, the strong autonomy accorded key economic regions, and general opposition to a centralized national government in Leopoldville, the former center of colonial power.¹² "For Congolese living outside of Leopoldville, the national capital represented the epitome of central superior authority. Whether exercised by black or white made little difference. It was something that they had finished with," espoused George Martelli, who lived through the upheaval.¹³ Most Congolese believed that a higher standard of living would come with jobs vacated by the whites. Laborers who went on strike on the first day of the four-day holiday were dispersed by rifle fire from the *Force Publique*.¹⁴

On 5 July 1960, *Force Publique* soldiers rebelled against their Belgian officers for higher rank, greater authority, and better pay. A general refusal to work for *status quo* wages shut down the public services.¹⁵ When the institution of law and order (*Force Publique*) disintegrated, the popular unrest grew rampant. Only in the foreign mining-financed Kasai and Katanga provinces was there any semblance of order.¹⁶ The sidebar detailing the ethnicity, population, languages, and religions in the Congo provides some perspective on the elements of conflict.

Lawlessness escalated to violent attacks on white Europeans everywhere except in the mineral-rich Katanga and Kasai provinces. As *Force Publique* armories were pillaged, tribal groups brandishing automatic weapons ruled indiscriminately. Flemish speakers were targeted. Congolese leaders had no means to restore order, nor stop the economic death spiral. No revenue was coming in, the small reserve had been exhausted, and monthly operating costs ranged from 8 to 10 million dollars.²⁶ Since political and social turmoil in Leopoldville were constants they will be ignored until the USEUCOM-directed rescue mission is discussed.



The Special Forces Mission

President Dwight D. Eisenhower knew that imperial governments would face demands for colonial independence after World War II. By 1960, decolonization was spreading across Africa, often bringing with it violence and instability. As anarchy engulfed the Congo Republic, the U.S. ambassador, Clare H. 'Tim' Timberlake, appointed just days before 30 June 1960, requested help from USEUCOM in France. The career Foreign Service Officer (FSO) did this before informing the State Department because the violence was escalating rapidly. Several hundred American and foreign missionaries, doctors, dentists, and nurses working deep in the Congo bush were at grave risk of attack. Isolated in very remote villages, they had no safe way to escape the rampant lawlessness.²⁷

Official U.S. military support to the Congo was to be discrete and low key. USAREUR, the Army service component command of USEUCOM, sent a classified teletypewriter exchange (TWX) message to the 10th SFG. Infantry Colonel (COL) Michael 'Iron Mike' Paulick had been alerted to expect a CONFIDENTIAL 'eyes only' TWX concerning the Congo crisis.²⁸

It was serendipitous that a Frenchman born in Belgium was assigned to the 10th SFG. First Lieutenant (1LT) Sully H. de Fontaine had just given a Congo presentation to a class of University of Maryland students taught by Major (MAJ) Charles M. Simpson III, the C Company commander.²⁹ As a newly promoted, seventeen-year-old British Corporal (CPL), Fontaine parachuted twice behind enemy lines in France for the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Using a French Resistance escape 'rat line' he led a downed Allied

aircrew to safety in Spain and an American aircrew to U.S. forces in France.³⁰ After the war, Fontaine attended the Belgian Military Academy. He spent a month serving with the Commandos in Kamina Barracks (Kasai Province, the Belgian Congo) as a cadet. The older dual-citizen American SF lieutenant who spoke Flemish and French better than English was the obvious choice to lead a clandestine rescue mission.³¹

Though 1LT Fontaine was the best qualified, COL Paulick spent an hour discussing the Congo situation with him to eliminate any doubts. U.S. Ambassador Timberlake had specifically asked for a French-speaking SF officer to orchestrate the rescue effort. To give Fontaine time to identify French-speaking volunteers, COL Paulick reminded the USAREUR staff that SF worked as teams. By the time Fontaine returned with his list, USAREUR had given direct liaison authority (DIRLAUTH) to Ambassador Timberlake to talk directly with COL Paulick.³²

From his list [Captain (CPT) Albert V. 'Jake' Clement, Specialist Five (SP5) Stefan Mazak, Sergeant (SGT) Vladimir Sobichevsky, a Georgian Russian who retired as a colonel,

Sergeant First Class (SFC) George M. Yosich, a Korean War (8240th AU) veteran, Master Sergeant [MSG (E-6)] Willard E. 'Pop' Grant, a Navy Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) Korean War veteran, and SGT Charles E. Hosking Jr., a WWII (Europe) 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) veteran (posthumous MOH - Vietnam)] Fontaine was told to select two.³³ The others would be placed on 'stand by' alert to join him in the Congo. SP5 Mazak was his first choice for non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of the team.

Fontaine chose SP5 Mazak, a WWII French Underground veteran and Lodge Act soldier from Czechoslovakia, and CPT Clement, a WWII (Pacific) and Korean War veteran, to join him on the advance echelon (ADVON) because they were the most fluent French speakers.³⁷ In early SF, it was not uncommon to place the most experienced soldier in charge, regardless of rank. If someone could not work under that arrangement, COL Paulick simply removed them from the mission. Clement had no problem working for Fontaine.³⁸ Firmly in charge of the mission, 1LT Fontaine would report only to Ambassador Timberlake. He was given 'full license to make it happen.'³⁹ The trio was flown to Evreux-Fauville



1



2

3

1 Soldier of the *Force Publique* in the Congo.

2 Within days of dispersing a Leopoldville city workers' strike the *Force Publique* mutinied against their Belgian officers.

3 Belgian King Baudoin I, President Joseph Kasavubu, & Premier Patrice E. Lumumba (7th from left) at the Independence Day celebration in Leopoldville on 30 June 1960.



CONGO 1960

ETHNICITY | POPULATION | LANGUAGES | RELIGIONS

LANGUAGES

There were five major languages:

- **French** (official)
- **Liungala** (a *lingua franca* trade language)
- **Kingwana** (a dialect of Swahili)
- **Kikongo**
- **Tshiluba**

Country-wide over 200 ethnic languages were spoken.

RELIGIONS

- **Roman Catholic** 50%;
- **Protestant** 20%;
- **Kingbanguist** 10%;
- **Islam** 10%;
- **Other** 10% (includes syncretic sects and animists).

LITERACY

In 1959, the literacy rate was among the highest in Africa. Although there were two newly-established universities (Elisabethville and Leopoldville) in the Republic, neither had graduated a Congolese engineer, medical doctor, university professor, or lawyer.¹⁹



Congo map showing Political Fragmentation & Territorial Control, 1960-61 with flag of the Belgian Congo. (Zaire: A Country Study, 34)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is populated by more than 250 ethnic groups. The majority are Bantu. The smallest, the pygmy peoples—Mbuti, Twa, Baka, and Babinga—are 1% of the population. Three of the four largest tribal groups, the Mongo, Luba, and Kongo are Bantu. The fourth, the Mangbetu-Azande, constituted 45% of the 15,358,000 person population in 1960. According to the census conducted by Belgium in 1958, there were 112,759 whites nationwide.¹⁷ Inter-ethnic fighting was endemic before independence. It was the *Force Publique* that responded to tribal wars.¹⁸

“The week-old Congo Republic is coming apart, exploding into a welter of anarchic terror. There is little sign here yet that the 13 million Congolese can be restrained from tearing apart their newly independent country. Amid the chaos of street mobs, mutineers, and terrified whites, the Congo’s chances of surviving as a unified country seemed to be vanishing in anarchy.”

— David Reed, *U.S. News & World Report* correspondent, 8 July 1960 cable.²⁵

Patrice E. Lumumba (1925-1961), the leader of the Congolese National Movement (*Mouvement National Congolais* [MNC]) that advocated for a strong central government, was a member of the Batela tribe, one of the smaller ethnic groups. The MNC dominated the legislative elections in May 1960, but Lumumba lacked tribal power. Since neither Lumumba nor his major political rival, Joseph Kasavubu, the leader of Abako (*Alliance des Ba-Kongo* [one of the four largest and most powerful ethnic groups]), could form a parliamentary coalition, the two split power in an uneasy partnership.²⁰

The charismatic Lumumba, also “known as a clever, anti-white rabble rouser,” dominated the political limelight as the Premier (legislative leader) and Minister of Defense.²¹ Kasavubu, a federalist favoring tribal autonomy, adopted a constrained role as Chief Executive/President. In the turmoil, Moïse Tshombe proclaimed the independence of the mineral-rich Katanga province on 11 July. By keeping Belgians in charge of the military and police Tshombe maintained order. On 8 August, Chief Albert Kalonji declared the Mining State of South Kasai to be independent.²² These secessions prompted Premier Lumumba to demand that the United Nations (UN) expel the Belgian forces and restore order in Katanga and Kasai. When the UN refused to interfere in the internal politics, Premier Lumumba asked the Soviet Premier, Nikita I. Khrushchev, to airlift the Congolese Army into the two provinces. This action caused Western leaders, already suspicious of Lumumba’s motives and political leanings, to label him a Communist.²³

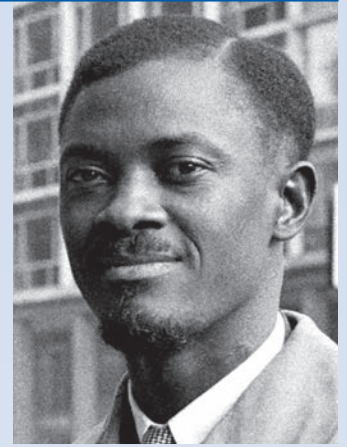
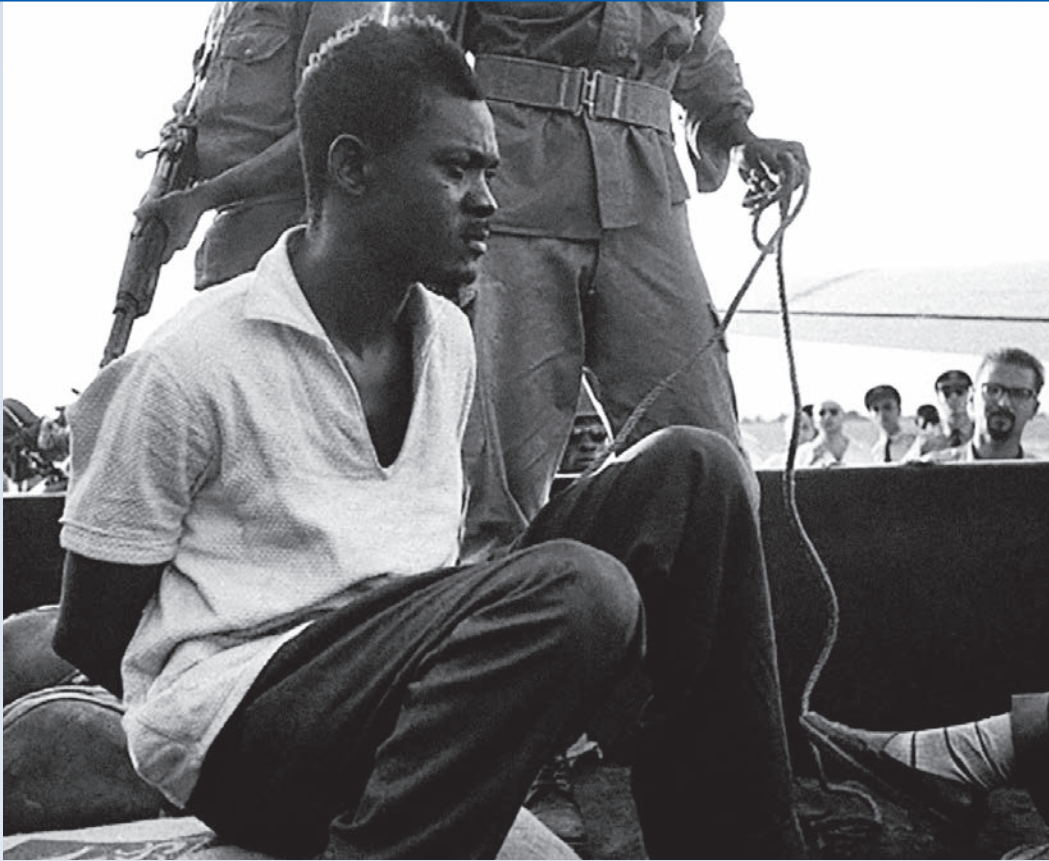
After the Congo premier and president unsuccessfully tried to fire one another in early September, the Army Chief of Staff, Joseph D. Mobutu, seized power to neutralize them. On 14 September 1960, Mobutu, a moderate, ordered all Soviet and East European diplomats and technicians out of the Congo. Lumumba was subsequently arrested and imprisoned. Then, he was transferred to Katanga and executed on 21 January 1961.²⁴ His deputy, co-founder of the leftist *Parti Solidaire Africain*, Antoine Gizenga, had already escaped to Stanleyville. Within a month Mobutu returned the presidency to Joseph Kasavubu and focused on reorganizing the Congolese Army.



President Joseph Kasavubu (C) and Premier & Defense Minister Patrice E. Lumumba at Ndjili Airport, Leopoldville, Congo Republic.

Thirty Years





Patrice E. Lumumba, Premier & Defense Minister, Congo Republic, was a gifted orator and rabble rouser. He symbolized African colonial independence. After Joseph D. Mobutu seized power Premier Lumumba was jailed in the Thysville Prison before being transferred to Katanga where he was killed. The Soviet Union created Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow after his death. The USSR issued a Commemorative Stamp in his honor in 1961.



1



2



3

1 Antoine Gizenga shared leadership of the Congolese National Movement (MNC).

2 Moïse Tshombe declared the independence of Katanga Province on 11 July 1960. It was January 1963 before the UN Peacekeeping Mission (ONUC) defeated the Katangan rebels and restored unity to the Congo Republic.

3 Joseph D. Mobutu, Commander-in-Chief, Congolese Army.

of Independent Disunity



A multi-lingual career Foreign Service Officer, Clare H. 'Tim' Timberlake, was the first U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo.



European refugees from the Congo were airlifted to Brussels.

Air Base (AB) in France after their Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) briefing in Heidelberg. Three U.S. Air Force squadrons stationed at Evreux had just been fielded with new C-130 *Hercules* turboprop transports.⁴⁰

Late Tuesday afternoon, 12 July 1960, the three SF soldiers, accompanied by a French-speaking U.S. Air Force, Europe (USAFE) radioman, Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Edward Cournoyer, climbed down from a C-130A at the Belgian-guarded Ndjili Airport just outside of Leopoldville. The four wore civilian clothes and carried suitcases to 'fit' their French Canadian medical 'cover.' The new turboprop aircraft had just escaped a rebel-controlled airstrip in a hail of gunfire. The pilot mistakenly landed on a gravel airstrip a few miles west of the Ndjili Airport. From Leopoldville, Belgian commandos had facilitated the evacuation of white Europeans aboard *Sabena*, the national airline, since 8 July 1960.⁴¹ "Despite the country-wide chaos, the Congolese international airport was relatively calm, much like the 'eye of a hurricane,'" recalled retired COL Sully Fontaine.⁴²

To avoid newspaper correspondents anticipating U.S. support, the Belgian military had the American Air Force plane park on the far side of the airport. While the aircrew hurried to load the crates of radio equipment, rations and generator aboard Belgian Army trucks, 1LT Fontaine arranged to get the loadmaster to a hospital to cast his broken leg. The Air Force crewman had been injured when a generator had come unlashd during a violent desert sand storm (*naboob*) above the Sahara. SP5 Mazak treated him aboard the aircraft.⁴³

Then, Fontaine explained to the Commando major in charge that his mission was to coordinate light airplane and helicopter rescues of American and foreign doctors,

nurses, and missionaries stranded in remote rural villages in the contested countryside.⁴⁴ Recognized as a fellow Military Academy cadet the Belgian officer reassured Fontaine that their medical cover story would be respected. Since sunrise and sunset in equatorial Africa were at 6 AM and PM respectively, the Americans were anxious to get to the Embassy before dark.⁴⁵

Ambassador Timberlake and his deputy, Robinson 'Rob' McIlvaine, the Consul General, welcomed the American team. While SSgt Cournoyer was setting up his radios in a spare room, 1LT Fontaine, CPT Clement, and SGT Mazak were briefed on the situation and told that U.S. military helicopters and light aircraft would arrive the next day. Since the Belgian Commando security mission at Ndjili Airport was temporary, Fontaine recommended that U.S. aircraft be based out of Brazzaville Airport in French Equatorial Africa. Ambassador Timberlake agreed, and that decision was immediately relayed to USAREUR to divert aircraft. The ambassador had already stationed a U.S. Consul at the Brazzaville airport to assist refugees.⁴⁶ A French Canadian medical 'cover' was acceptable to the U.S. emissary.⁴⁷

The Americans would adopt names related to the humanitarian rescue mission codename, ROBERT SEVEN. 1LT Fontaine would be ROBERT ONE. He would be 'carried on Embassy books' as an Air Force first lieutenant in the Air Attaché Office. He would liaison daily with the ambassador.⁴⁸ His role in the rescue mission was kept from the CIA Station Chief, Lawrence R. 'Larry' Devlin, who had been 'in country' three days.⁴⁹ CPT Clement was designated ROBERT TWO and SP5 Mazak was ROBERT THREE. SSgt Cournoyer, as ROBERT FOUR, would be in

CODENAME: ROBERT SEVEN



L - 21st Army Group SSI
R - SAS Parachute Wings

1LT Sully Hubert de Fontaine

DOB: 27 February 1927

POB: Brussels, Belgium (French citizen)

HS: 1943, England

1943-May 1945: British Special Operations Executive (SOE), Parachute & Commando Schools, France, Spain, Holland & Belgium (finally w/21st Army Group), 2 wound stripes, 2 combat jumps, CPL to Subaltern

49-51: Belgian Military Academy, 2LT

51-52: Belgian Army, UN Cmd, Korea, 2LT-1LT

Oct 52-Feb 54: US emigré (Rhode Island)

Mar 54-Jan 55: BCT, AIT & Unit Supply Course, Ft Dix, NJ, SGT (Temporary)

Feb-May 55: 12th Co, Infantry Officer Candidate School (OCS), Ft Benning, GA, 2LT

May 55-Dec 57: Special Duty (SD) USAREUR - Budapest, Hungary, 77th SFG, SF Officers Course, SD SWCS Instructor, Ft Bragg, NC, 1LT

Jan 58-Jul 62: HHC, 10th SFG, Bad Toelz, FRG & TDY Congo (LOM), Lebanon, Greece, Algeria, CPT RA, MPC

Aug 62-Feb 63: MP Officer Advanced Course, Ft Gordon, GA, & SD HQ DA Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities (SACSA)- Republic of Vietnam (RVN)

Feb 63-Dec 64: 5th SFG, Ft Bragg, NC (ODA Cdr, RVN, 6 Nov 63-1 May 64), CPT

ROBERT ONE

Dec 64-30 Dec 65: HHC, 5th SFG & MACV-SOG, RVN, 27 BSM, MAJ

6 Feb 66-6 Dec 67: CID Det Cdr, France & Worms, FRG, MAJ

14 Jan 68-14 Jan 69: 18th MP Bde w/duty CIDC, USARV, RVN, BSM, MAJ

Feb 69-Oct 71: CIDC, Washington, DC, LTC

25 Nov 71-20 Jun 73: Provost Marshal, 1st Armored Div, Germany, MSM, LTC

30 Jun 73-30 Jun 75: Control Tm B Cdr, JCRC, Thailand, JSCM w/V, (retirement), LOM, LTC

86-87: Recalled AD by ASD for CIA detail, retired COL, 1987.³⁴



L - 24th Infantry Division SSI
R - 7th Infantry Division SSI

CPT Albert Valentine 'Jake' Clement

DOB: 14 Feb 23

POB: Fall River, MA

HS: May 1941, Fall River

Jun 1941-24 May 1945: 3rd Engr Bn, 24th ID, Hawaii & Pacific Theater, PFC, BSM

Break in Service (BIS)

Aug-Nov 48: H Co, 351st Inf Regt, Trieste, PFC

Dec 48-Mar 49: Abn & Glider School, Ft Benning, GA, PFC

Mar 49-Feb 51: D Co, 505th PIR, 82nd Abn Div, Ft Bragg, NC, CPL

Feb 51-Aug 51: 9th Rgr Co & B Co, Rgr Tng Cmd, Ft Benning, GA, SGT

BIS

Sep-Nov 51: BCT, 8th ID, Ft Jackson, SC, PFC

Dec 51-Jul 52: B Co, 29th Inf Regt & A Co, 32nd Inf Regt, 7th ID, Okinawa, Japan & Korea, PFC to MSG to Direct Commission 2LT, 2 PHs, 2 BSVs & 2 SSS

Aug-Dec 52: Infantry Officer Basic Course, Ft Benning, GA

Jan 53-Oct 54: I&R PL, HHC, 504th PIR, 82nd Abn Div, Ft Bragg, NC, Motor Officer Course (TDY Ft Benning), 2LT to 1LT

ROBERT TWO

Oct 54-Jul 59: 77th SFG, SF Officers Course (33-O-5) Jan-Mar 55, FBs-1 & 11, FA-3, Infantry Advanced Course (TDY Ft Benning), Cold Weather & Mountain Training (TDY Alaska), 1LT to CPT

Jul 59-Jul 60: B Co Cdr, U.S. Army Supply Control Center, Maison Forte, France

Jul 60-Jul 62: Cdr, FA-20, Russian Language Course (TDY), 1st Company (Prov), 10th SFG, Bad Toelz, Germany

Jul 62 until retired 31 Aug 64: USAR Advisor, XIII Corps, Boston, MA, Major (MAJ).³⁵



L - 1st Free French Division SSI
R - Czech Shoulder Flag

SP5 Stefan Mazak

DOB: 23 March 1926

POB: Dolne Srni, Czechoslovakia

ED: 1932-1940, Tartier, France

Mar 1944-Jun 1945: French Underground, 67th Inf Bn, Corporal (CPL)

Sep 45-Aug 53: postwar repatriation Czechoslovakia, construction worker, imprisoned (7 months) for trying to escape, drafted Czech Socialist Republic (CSR) Army, 217th Inf Bn, Oct 50-Feb 51, CPL, steel cutter, SKODA ironworks

Aug 53-Feb 54: Escaped to Bavaria, FRG, Camp 'Valka', Nurnberg, Lodge Act Alien Enlistee, Zweibrucken, PV1

Feb-Jul 54: BCT & AIT, E Co, 47th Inf Regt, 9th Infantry Division (ID) & A Co, 364th Inf Regt, 69th ID, Ft Dix, NJ, PV1

Jul-Oct 54: G Co, 504th PIR, 82nd Abn Div Basic Airborne School (Class 12), Ft Bragg, NC, PV2

Oct 54-Feb 57: FB-6, 77th SFG, Ft Bragg, SF Lt & Hvy Wpns tng, Winter Military Mountaineering Course, Camp Hale, CO, PFC to SP3 (E-4)

Feb 57-Jan 61: 1st Prov Co & B Co, 10th SFG, (TDY Russian Language & 7th Army NCO Academy), Bad Toelz, FRG, SP3 to SP5

ROBERT THREE

Feb 57-Jun 63: C Co, Special Warfare Training Group (SWTG) & HHC, D, B & C Co, 7th SFG, Ft Bragg, Laos (WHITE STAR 30 Mar-4 Aug 62, CIB), Combat & Construction NCO Course (TDY Ft Belvoir, VA), HS GED, SSG

Jun 66-Dec 67: B Co, 10th SFG, Bad Toelz, Jun 63-Jun 66, SFC; A Co, 6th SFG, Special Duty (SD) to SWTG as Wpns Instructor, Ops & Intel NCO Course, Ft Bragg

Dec 67 until KIA 4 Apr 68: B-56, 5th SFG, Lt Wpns NCO, PH2 & SS (P), Long Khanh, III Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ), RVN.³⁶

charge of the embassy radio base station that connected Heidelberg, Bad Toelz, and Brazzaville Airport. COL Paulick would be updated by message traffic, telephone calls from Ambassador Timberlake, and by CPT Richard 'Dick' Kim, another 'Ham' operator working in the 10th SFG Operations Section, monitoring that system.⁵⁰ The Air Force communications 'wizard' got his 'Ham' radio working and began broadcasting as "U.S. Congo Rescue Central."⁵¹ But, maps to guide air rescues in the bush were scarce.

Ambassador Timberlake had the 'best' map of the Congo, circa 1950, mounted on his office wall. No others were available because Congolese had burned the map warehouse shortly after independence. Road maps from the Belgian Congo Auto Club, though dated and lacking detail, had to suffice. McIlvaine, a WWII Navy veteran, gave twenty to Fontaine. After a simple sandwich meal, ROBERT ONE, TWO, and THREE were driven to the ambassador's residence for the night. Timberlake was 'living' in his office.⁵²

At daybreak Wednesday, 13 July 1960, an embassy car took the three SF soldiers to the Congo River ferry landing. There they witnessed firsthand some mutinous, inebriated Congolese soldiers harassing the Belgian families waiting to board Brazzaville ferries. When passage was secured (tickets), the Europeans abandoned cars and trucks to carry babies, suitcases, boxes and pets to get in the boarding line.⁵³ Once beyond the safety of their vehicles, harassment from the Congolese troops began. They were in various states of "battle dress with leaves and brush tied to their helmets (*matiti*) lounging near the access way. Some carried

rifles while others had machetes," reported Larry Devlin, the Station Chief.⁵⁴

ROBERT THREE, the former French Underground and Czech Republic soldier, moved forward to check out the situation. He described the scene at the ferry dock differently:

*"There are a couple hundred whites lined up waiting to get on the ferry and the rebels are taking anything of value. Their uniforms look like s**t. One guy carrying an assault rifle is wearing a business suit...a suit, white shirt and tie with military webbing on. Can you believe that? They all look like rabble, not rebels. But, they're bloody armed to the teeth. They've all got two or three weapons..."*⁵⁵

The quick thinking Czech prevented an older woman from having her ring finger broken by a Congolese soldier. He simply stepped between them and applied *Vaseline* from his 'Red Cross' medical pack. A wedding ring, he decided, was not worth injury. The rebels appreciated the jar of salve to facilitate their plundering.⁵⁶ Interestingly, the French-speaking 'Canadian Red Cross' medics were accorded a measure of respect by the rebellious troops.

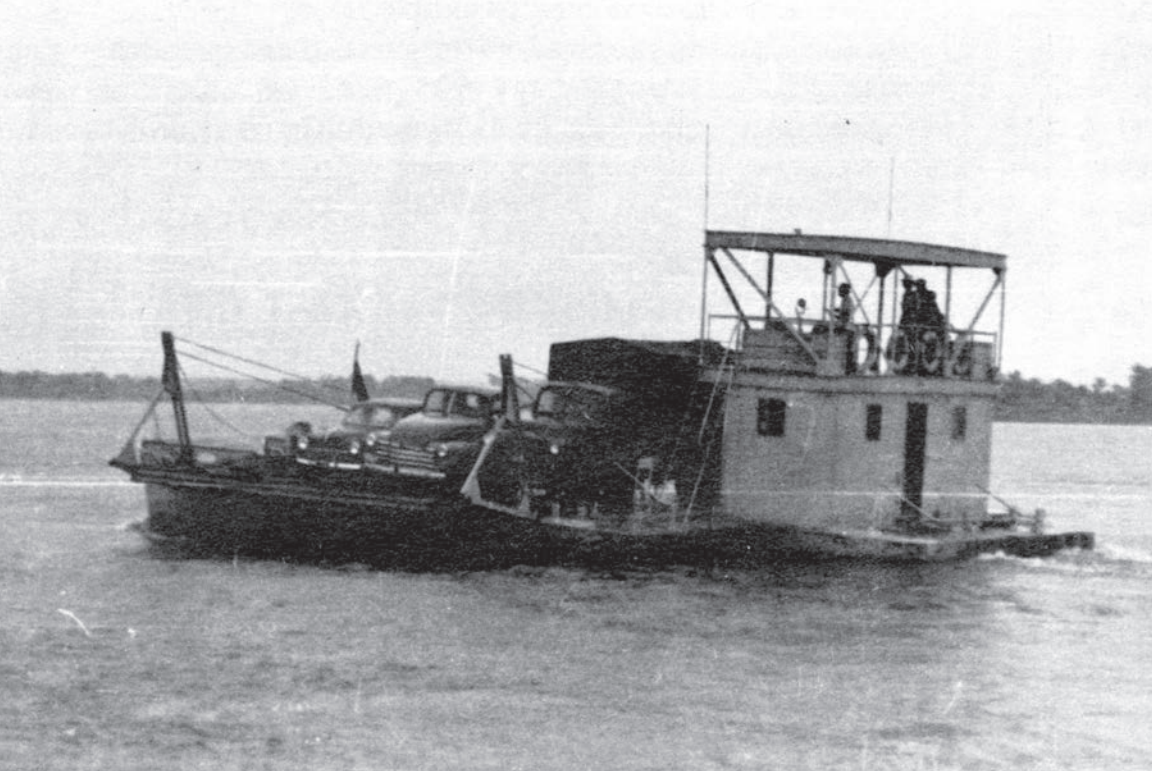
In the prevailing disorder patience was required. The three 'Canadian Red Cross' medics were escorted to the front of the line, but the strong currents of the ¾ mile-wide Congo River had to be navigated by the grossly overloaded ferry, and a taxi hired to take the ROBERTs to the airport. The French Air Base Commander, LTC Cottar, met with ROBERT ONE to discuss housing,

C-124 Globemaster IIs delivered the U.S. Air Force, Europe (USAFE) 58th Air Rescue Squadron H-21 Workhorse helicopter (Wheelus Airbase, Tripoli, Libya) to Brazzaville Airport, French Equatorial Africa.



The 317th Troop Carrier Wing at Evreux-Fauxville Airbase in France received three squadrons of the new Lockheed C-130A Hercules turboprop transports in early 1960.





The ramshackle Congo River ferries were packed to the rails with refugees and motor vehicles. Safety was not an issue for those fleeing the former Belgian colony.



AF SSgt Edward Cournoyer established himself as 'U.S. Congo Rescue Central' and began broadcasting with his Ham radio from the U.S. Embassy-Leopoldville on 12 July 1960. This is the International Amateur Radio Symbol.

aircraft fuel, maintenance and facilities for the U.S. military light aircraft. Then, the Americans went to a sporting goods store in Brazzaville to buy safari clothing. When they returned the French lieutenant colonel provided them with two 9 mm MAT-49 (*Manufacture National d'Armes de Tulle* 1949) folding-stock submachineguns and extra magazines. These substantially bolstered their 'self-defense arsenal' from Bad Toelz: three M1911 .45 caliber automatic pistols and a box of fragmentation hand grenades.⁵⁷ ROBERT ONE introduced himself to the senior U.S. Army aviator, a major, before going to see what had come from Europe.⁵⁸

Several U.S. Air Force planes had arrived carrying helicopters. A four-engine C-124 *Globemaster II* (from Chateauroux AB, France) brought a 58th Air Rescue Squadron H-21B *Workhorse* ('*Flying Banana*') helicopter, crew, and mechanics from Wheelus AB, Tripoli, Libya.⁵⁹ Two C-130s had flown in a pair of H-19 *Choctaw* helicopters with aircrews and mechanics from Germany. The Army aviation major as Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of the U.S. Aviation Detachment, became ROBERT FIVE. The six light airplanes 'hopping' to the Congo [two DeHaviland U1-A *Otter* and four L-20 *Beaver* STOL (short takeoff/landing)] were due in before dark. They were coming in two flights (U1-As & L-20s) direct from Germany, stopping only to refuel. ROBERT ONE told ROBERT FIVE that he would provide a mission brief after everyone arrived.⁶⁰

At the request of the Aviation Detachment OIC, ROBERT ONE slipped his briefing to early morning, Thursday, 14 July 1960. Though the faster flying, longer range *Otters* arrived well ahead of the slower, shorter range *Beavers*, the fixed-wing aviators were mentally and physically drained. Despite two pilots per aircraft, they had flown more than 1200 miles

with limited or no ground navigation aids (NAVAID) across Europe, the Mediterranean Sea, and uncharted African deserts. The Aviation Detachment with its Army and Air Force personnel grew to more than seventy airmen, mechanics, administrative, medical, and supply personnel.⁶¹ Unable to get back to Leopoldville before dark on Wednesday, 13 July, ROBERT ONE radioed ROBERT FOUR to talk with Ambassador Timberlake. After that conversation ROBERT FOUR provided the evacuation requests because the rescues would begin the next day—14 July 1960.⁶²

Shortly after first light on Thursday, 14 July, ROBERT ONE, nattily dressed in a khaki safari bush hat, shirt, shorts, and brogans, addressed the assembled Aviation Detachment. He explained in detail the situation, their mission and the evacuation plan. They would use jungle airstrips while the Belgians flew their larger civilian and military fixed wing transports from established airports.⁶³ An American Consul located at the airport (Brazzaville) was processing refugees, arranging flights on *Sabena Airlines* and aboard U.S. Air Force aircraft, and housing them in a temporary holding area.⁶⁴ Standard operating procedures (SOP) for rescue operations ended the briefing.

The helicopters each carried a 55-gallon drum of aviation gasoline (AVGAS) and hand pump to emergency refuel. With evacuation requests received from the villages of Banza-Manteke and Sona-Bata, 1LT Fontaine led the first mission aboard the Air Force H-21 helicopter with one Army H-19 helicopter trailing.⁶⁶

ROBERT ONE and the helicopter pilots quickly discovered that their 1/250,000 scale air and Belgian Congo Auto Club maps were inadequate. 'Dead reckoning' using compass headings and distance 'guesstimating' based on airspeed

prompted the pilots to fly at different altitudes to improve visual acuity and maintain radio communications. After considerable searching the two aircraft finally located Banza-Menteke and Sona-Bata. Twenty-four Americans were shuttled to Brazzaville in several lifts. The wisdom of the 'two aircraft rule' was verified; however, newer, smaller scale maps had to be found.⁶⁷

ROBERT ONE explained his problem to LTC Cottar, the airbase commander, and MAJ Bena, an intelligence officer from *Deuxième Bureau* (National D-2). A meeting was arranged in Leopoldville with Henry Latur, a Belgian aerial photographer, who had been mapping the Congo before independence. He kept his airplane and had a dark room at the Brazzaville Airport. With the possibility of getting paid for what he had done, the photographer agreed to share his photos, bush flying experience, and knowledge of the countryside. A native Flemish speaker proved essential to the negotiations. The aerial photos were indispensable because they reduced the search time to allow for more rescues.⁶⁸

The next day, 15 July, the three SF ROBERTs, using the two Army H-19 *Choctaw* helicopters, rescued twenty-six

American, British, and Belgian citizens from the villages of Kimpese, Moerbeke, Zongo, and Sanga. Then, the SF ROBERTs rescued another twelve individuals from Lutete in the afternoon with the Air Force H-21 *Workhorse*.⁶⁹ While these rescues were ongoing that day, Belgian troops raced into Leopoldville to seize all refugee escape routes. In accordance with unsigned pre-independence agreements, several all-Belgian combat units had been left behind in Kamina for ninety days to reinforce the *Force Publique*.⁷⁰ The motorized Belgian columns easily took control of all roads to the ferry and the airport. The soldiers had been dispatched to safeguard the lives of whites and to ensure that any wanting to escape 'the jungle of anarchy' could do so.⁷¹

Ambassador Timberlake took advantage of the Belgian security measures to evacuate several American families that had taken refuge in the embassy. These fifteen personnel and their baggage were bundled into a convoy of cars that collected another fifty-five Americans stranded in hotels across the city. Because Consul Frank C. Carlucci III had built the best connections with Congolese government leaders, he and Larry Devlin, the Station Chief, escorted

1 The U.S. Air Force H-21 *Workhorse* (nicknamed 'Flying Banana') helicopter with a crew of two (pilot & co-pilot) could carry 12 U.S. combat-loaded troops at 85 mph for 450 miles.

2 The U.S. Army Korean War era H-19 *Choctaw* with a crew of two (pilot & co-pilot) could carry ten U.S. combat-loaded soldiers at 85 mph for 450 miles.

3 The Army L-20/U-6 *Beaver* STOL (short takeoff/landing) airplane had a crew of one (pilot) and could carry 6 passengers at 143 mph for 455 miles.

4 The U.S. Army U1-A *Otter* STOL airplane with a crew of one (pilot) could carry 9-10 passengers at 160 mph for 945 miles.



1



2



3



4

the convoy of cars to the Congo River ferry dock and secured passage on vessels crossing to Brazzaville. The American embassy in Leopoldville was so new that its U.S. Marine security detail had not yet arrived.⁷² With cars and trucks denied passage on the ferries more than 200 men, women, and children could be packed aboard. Because few Congolese knew how to drive, 'appropriated' cars and trucks abandoned by whites quickly littered city streets—with engines blown and/or clutches burned out.⁷³ In the meantime, air rescues continued.

On 16 and 17 July, sixty-six personnel were evacuated by helicopter. The SF ROBERTs encountered three scenarios in the remote villages: mutilated white bodies in various stages of decomposition; white families hidden from marauders by loyal Congolese; and those electing to stay despite the atrocities all around—longstanding missionaries, nuns, and medical personnel.⁷⁴ The former was the most disconcerting to the team.⁷⁵

On 18 July, the H-21 was sent to Vanga, two L-20 *Beavers* were dispatched to Nicki, and two H-19s were sent to Inkisi, then to Kikemebele. The number of aircraft committed revealed that deviations from the SOP had started: the 'two aircraft-buddy team' and security overwatch rules for the SF ROBERTs were ignored.⁷⁶ The two H-19 *Choctaws* were driven off by ground fire near Kikemebele; one helicopter took eight hits from automatic rifle fire. The *Beavers* carried out eleven people from Nicki and ROBERT ONE arranged for a U.S. Air Force C-47 *Skytrain* to evacuate the remaining twenty-seven. That WWII twin-engine workhorse was flying home [the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG)] to Praetoria, South Africa, when it diverted in response to a radio call for help. The C-47 pilots rescued twenty-seven fear-stricken evacuees from Nicki. Hostile fire disabled an engine, but the French Air Force at Brazzaville replaced it.⁷⁷ More deviations from the SOP resulted in a serious incident on the way to Vanga.

Unable to locate Vanga, the H-21 *Workhouse* with only ROBERT TWO onboard landed outside Dinga to get directions. ROBERT TWO went into the village alone. When he did not return promptly, Air Force LT George Meyers, the co-pilot, ignored SOP and climbed out of the idling helicopter to search for him. The pilot was left alone at the controls. Meyers did not find ROBERT TWO, but encountered an American missionary, George Franke. As the Air Force lieutenant and Mr. Franke were heading back to the helicopter, a number of hostile Congolese began chasing after them. Then, a *Life* magazine photo-journalist, Terry Spencer, who had been hiding in the cargo compartment, jumped out with his camera. He managed to take pictures of LT Meyers and Franke fleeing towards the H-21. Spencer missed the return of ROBERT TWO because he was running obliquely to the idling helicopter. After Franke and Meyers scrambled aboard, Spencer, camera in hand, followed as ROBERT TWO ran up. The H-21 immediately lifted clear of the danger but the damage had been done. The newspaperman had his story and photos.⁷⁸

After finding Vanga, twenty-eight people were evacuated in separate lifts. During the evacuations SOPs were totally disregarded and Spencer continued taking pictures.⁷⁹

With the rescue mission potentially compromised ROBERT ONE brought Spencer to the U.S. Embassy to see Ambassador Timberlake. His film negatives were checked closely. Since he had no photos of ROBERT TWO at Dinga or Vanga to postulate an SF presence in the Congo, Timberlake requested that Spencer delay dispatching his story in exchange for details on the numbers rescued. This 'gentlemen's agreement' was honored; the story was published in the 8 August 1960 issue of *Life* magazine. By then, the American military light aircraft rescue mission was long over.⁸⁰ Back in the primary area of operations, evacuation requests from villages 'close in' to Leopoldville had been exhausted.

SOP RESCUE OPERATIONS

- 1 The USEUCOM humanitarian rescue effort was classified CONFIDENTIAL because of its political sensitivity.
- 2 Aircraft would fly in pairs for safety reasons (two-plane 'buddy rule'). There would be two SF ROBERTs in the lead aircraft. The third SF ROBERT would be in the second plane that remained aloft to maintain communications and to alert the ground team of danger. It was not to land until radioed to do so by an SF ROBERT on the ground.
- 3 Pilots were to stay at their controls with engines running, ready for an immediate departure. The pilots were not to leave the cockpit for any reason. Any weapons carried had to be concealed and were not to be used without an SF ROBERT signaling to do so.
- 4 The lead aircraft would make a 'touch and go' to evaluate landing conditions and assess the situation on the ground, do a 'fly around' and then land to allow the two SF ROBERTs to get out and contact the whites wishing evacuation. One SF ROBERT would cover the other with a concealed weapon (submachinegun, .45 automatic, and/or a hand grenade).
- 5 While one aircraft carried evacuees out, the other would stay aloft to rescue the SF ROBERTs on the ground and maintain radio communications with them, U.S. Congo Rescue Central (ROBERT FOUR), and ROBERT FIVE at the Brazzaville Airport.
- 6 The signal that it was safe to land was one white sheet while two sheets signified danger and/or unsafe to land. ROBERT FOUR passed those signals to the 'Ham' operators in the remote villages.⁶⁵

REFUGEE RESCUE

First Lieutenant (1LT) George Meyers, 58th Air Rescue Squadron (Wheelus Airbase, Tripoli, Libya), co-pilot of the H-21 Workhorse helicopter, ignored their flight SOP. He left the cockpit to search for ROBERT TWO [SF Captain (CPT) Albert V. Clement] who had gone into Dinga for directions to Vanga. Spotting the helicopter a few Belgian refugees in cars vectored in on it. As they ran to clamber aboard Terry Spencer, a *Life* magazine photo-journalist hidden in the cargo compartment, scrambled out to take pictures. He caught LT Meyers with George Franke, an American missionary, first walking, and then running as hostile Congolese began chasing them and shooting. The gunfire forced Spencer back inside the helicopter just before CPT Clement ran up. Shrapnel from a ricocheting bullet nicked a Belgian's nose. The British war correspondent took photographs during the two lifts of evacuees from Vanga. But, true to his agreement with U.S. Ambassador Clare H. Timberlake, Spencer did not send his story to *Life* while the American light aircraft rescue mission was ongoing. (*Life*, 10 August 1960, 10-17)



Terrence 'Terry' Spencer (1918-2009)

Royal Air Force (RAF) Spitfire & Hurricane pilot, Squadron Leader, WWII, December 1939–February 1946, Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC), destroyed seven V-1 rocket 'buzz' bombs, POW twice—escaped once (Steve McQueen in *The Great Escape*)...Aerial photographer and diamond smuggler, South Africa, 1946-1952...*Life* magazine war correspondent:



Sharpeville massacre, Mau-Mau uprising, Congo crisis, Nigerian civil war, Nelson Mandela and Jomo Kenyatta—Apartheid in Africa, the Algerian war, Vietnam, Indonesia, Middle East, and Cuba; *Life* celebrity photographer for The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Freddie Mercury, Ava Gardner, Katherine Hepburn, Princess Grace of Monaco, 1952-1972... *New York Times* and *People* magazine celebrity photographer: Princess Diana to Louis Armstrong, 1972-1992.¹⁰³

To extend aircraft range, ROBERT ONE proposed to establish a pair of forward operating bases at Belgian Army-secured airstrips near Coquilhatville and Kikwit. The U.S. ambassador agreed with extending the rescue effort to the north and northwest. However, only selected airplanes and helicopters would go north on 19 July.⁸¹ The Army STOL airplanes, the *Otters* and *Beavers*, and the two H-19 *Choctaw* helicopters had the longest ranges. The Air Force H-21 *Workhorse* would remain at Brazzaville for local emergencies. The 18 July mission to Vanga was its last Congo flight.⁸² 'Away from the flagpole,' buoyed with five days of success, and having escaped compromise, deviation from the SOP became the norm.

The three SF ROBERTs split themselves between the two forward operating sites and went on missions with available aircraft. An H-19 and an L-20 flying out of Kikwit on 20 July with ROBERT TWO evacuated nineteen personnel from the villages of Boeme, Kalagonda, Kintshua, and Tshene.⁸³ Then, ROBERTs ONE and THREE took a single U-1A *Otter* from Coquilhatville to Wema and Boende. Once on the ground the two men split up.⁸⁴ Any problems that they encountered were not mentioned in the Rescue Mission Report or the *USAREUR 1953-1963 History Report*. Nothing was found in the three OMPR files of the SF ROBERTs.⁸⁵ But, when a second U-1A *Otter* arrived, twelve evacuees and the two ROBERTs were shuttled out.⁸⁶ During the period 19-23 July 1960, specific nightly locations of the three SF ROBERTs and the various aircraft could not be determined.⁸⁷

However, the military light aircraft team was quite busy. Kikwit handled fifty evacuees on 20 and 21 July. Two L-20s and a U-1A brought twelve refugees to Coquilhatville on 21 July. *Sabena Airlines* evacuated twenty-four British missionaries from Basankusu. And, on 22 July, eight Catholic nuns and a sick priest were flown to Kikwit to catch a Belgian Air Force C-119 *Flying Boxcar* going to Brazzaville. One of two L-20s sent to make final checks of Belenda, Semandua, Kutu, and Inongo on 23 July was hit by small arms fire. That visual reconnaissance was the final U.S. light aircraft rescue mission.⁸⁸

From 14 to 22 July 1960, eight Army aircraft and one Air Force helicopter evacuated 239 personnel and coordinated airlift for another 51 people on larger U.S. and Belgian

airplanes. Two Aviation Detachment aircraft sustained minor damage from small arms ground fire.⁸⁹ While this American military mission was engaged in rescuing Americans and foreigners from the Congo bush, the United Nations (UN) approved the creation of a peacekeeping force for the Congo. The U.S. Air Force transported contingents from Ghana and Tunisia to Ndjili Airport on 15 July and flew refugees back to Europe.⁹⁰ The Congo River separated the two elements based at different airports. Once the light aircraft bush rescue mission was completed, the U.S. military task force supporting Ambassador Timberlake started transferring equipment, supplies, and communication networks to the UN.

The 10th SFG role ended when ROBERTs TWO and THREE left the Congo on 26 July. The explanation for their absence from Bad Toelz, Germany, was 'a classified mission in Spain.' Ambassador Timberlake convinced COL Paulick to allow 1LT Fontaine to stay for thirty more days to capitalize on his government contacts.⁹¹

Epilogue

On 24 July the EUCOM Aviation Detachment relocated from the Brazzaville Airport to the Ndjili Airport across the Congo River. That airport was designated as the UN Air Command base. In addition to the two H-19 *Choctaw* medium transport helicopters, two U-1A *Otter*, and four L-20 *Beaver* STOL airplanes, USAREUR transferred six Korean War-era H-13 *Sioux* light observation helicopters to the UN. The Army aviators conducted a 'checkout' program for UN volunteer pilots from fifteen different nations. They were oriented on flying conditions, weather, and environmental nuances in the million square miles of the Congo.⁹²

When the Air Force 58th Air Rescue Squadron H-21 *Workhorse* helicopter team learned that USAREUR was transferring its aircraft to the UN, they quickly arranged transport back to Wheelus Airbase, Tripoli, Libya. While this was happening, USAREUR signalmen installed radios in the control tower so that U.S. Army air traffic control (ATC) soldiers could train UN personnel. Mechanics and repairmen provided technical instruction to UN personnel on aircraft and radio maintenance. USAFE SSgt Edward Cournoyer and the USAREUR pilots, mechanics, supply, and medical personnel worked themselves out of jobs by 31 July. When 1LT Fontaine left the Congo on 27 August the UN buildup was in full swing.⁹³

The first contingent of UN forces arrived on 15 July. Belgium began its withdrawal of combat troops on 16 July and the last elements left Leopoldville on 23 July. By 20 July there were 3,500 UN peacekeepers from Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, and Tunisia in the country. With the U.S. Air Force transporting foreign contingents the UN buildup continued: 8,000 by 25 July; and over 11,000 by 31 July.⁹⁴ With its Air Command established at Ndjili Airport, the UN was able to expand its peacekeeping mission in the Congo to peace enforcement.⁹⁵

The UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo (ONUC for its French name *Opération des Nations Unis au Congo*) became



Opération des Nations Unis au Congo I (ONUC I) became the largest, most complex, and most expensive UN peacekeeping mission during the Cold War.



1



2



3



4



5

1 Canadian U-1A Otter with UN markings in Congo.

2 USAREUR U-1A Otter inside Ndjili Airport hangar, Leopoldville, Republic of Congo.

3 USAREUR L-20 Beavers with ONUC markings.

4 USAREUR H-19 Choctaw with UN markings.

5 USAREUR sent six H-13 Sioux observation helicopters to the UN Air Command in the Congo.

its largest, most complex and expensive military mission during the Cold War.⁹⁶ The peacekeeping mandate was expanded in February 1961 to end the secession of Katanga province. After UN ground forces ‘invaded’ the province a shooting war developed in September 1961, when a single Katangan Air Force Fouga Magister jet fighter strafed the UN headquarters and its defensive positions, isolated an Irish infantry company to force a surrender, damaged UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld’s aircraft, and destroyed several chartered airplanes at the Elizabethville Airport. Premier Möise Tshombé scrambled to rebuild his air force using the black arms market while the UN solicited combat aircraft from the member nations.⁹⁷ UN defeat of the Katangan military in January 1963 finally restored the secessionist province to the Congo, but the international body faced another decade of turmoil.⁹⁸

Postscript

In late January 1961, the three 10th SFG soldiers were decorated for conducting sixteen rescues of American and European citizens from remote jungle areas of the Congo.

They faced possible capture and death at the hands of warring tribes. The rescues were accomplished “in the face of a highly explosive internal political situation.”⁹⁹ 1LT Sully H. Fontaine was awarded the Legion of Merit (LOM) by Department of Army. CPT Albert V. ‘Jake’ Clement and SP5 Stefan Mazak were presented Army Commendation Medals (ARCOMs) approved by the Seventh U.S. Army, USAREUR.¹⁰⁰ The three qualified for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) and the UN ONUC I medal.¹⁰¹ The U.S. Army Adjutant General (TAG), Major General (MG) R.V. Lee, reminded these SF soldiers about the sensitivity of their mission: “Disclosure of this information to news media may be made only in the event of specific inquiry.” Associated risk was downplayed: “By assisting the U.S. Ambassador in protecting U.S. nationals in the Republic of the Congo, you greatly aided in alleviating a potentially dangerous situation.”¹⁰² Three Special Forces soldiers, 1LT Fontaine, CPT Clement, and SP5 Mazak from the 10th SFG clandestinely effected light aircraft rescues and coordinated transport for nearly 300 American and European refugees in the Congo. These accomplishments by truly ‘silent professionals’ went unheralded for almost sixty years. ▲

CHARLES H. BRISCOE, PhD

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations in Latin America, the Congo, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

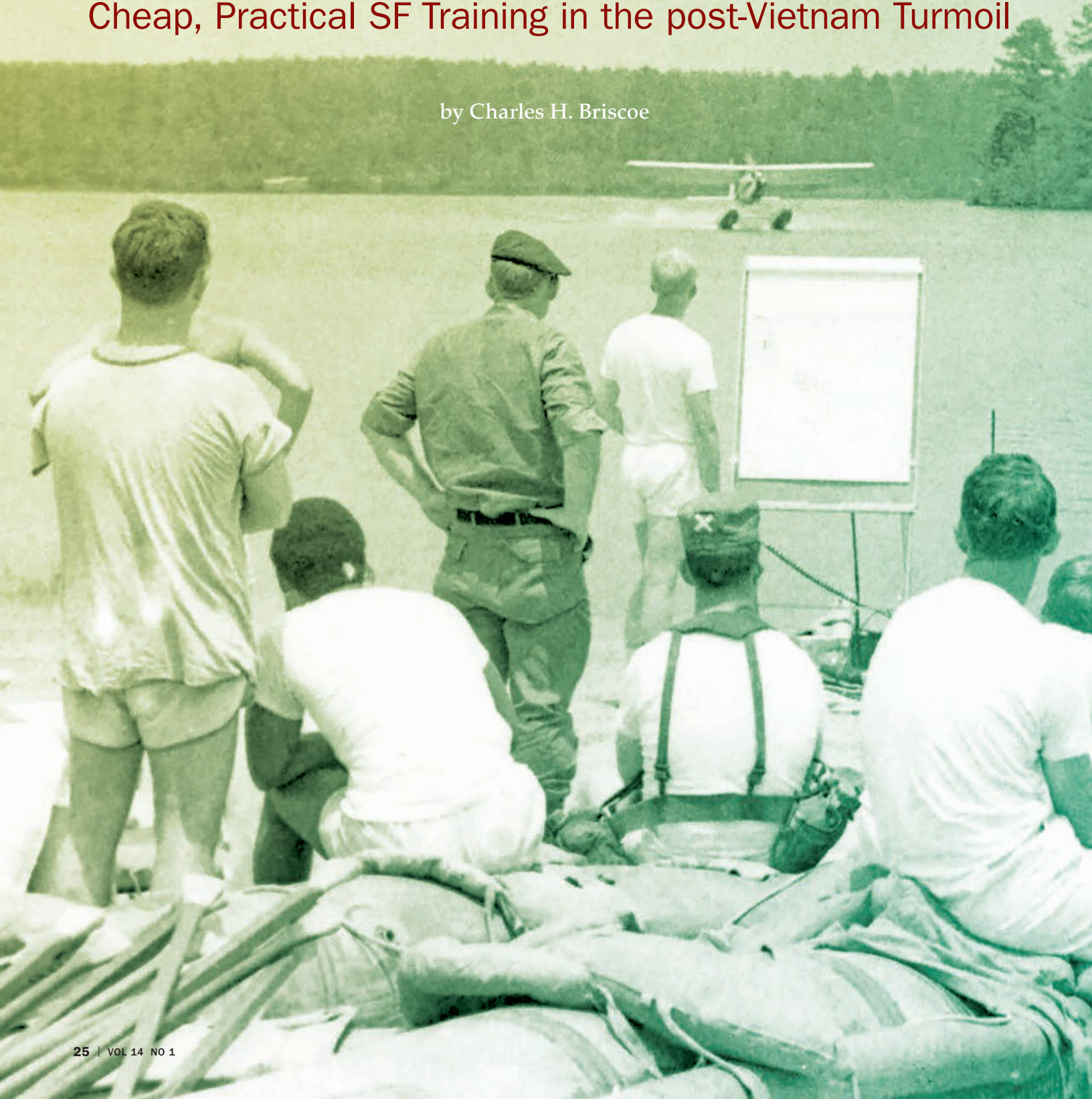
- 1 Sandra W. Meditz and Tim Merrill, eds., *Zaire: A Country Study*. Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 550-67 (Fourth Edition, Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1994), 28.
- 2 Meditz and Merrill, *Zaire*, 31.
- 3 Albert J. Meyers, "Airlift from Terror—The Refugees' Story," *U.S. World & News Report*, 49:52 (25 July 1960), 53.
- 4 D. J. Hickman, *The United States Army in Europe, 1953-1963* (Heidelberg, Germany: Operations Division Historical Section, 1964), 181, hereafter cited as *USAREUR History Report, 1953-1963*.
- 5 Alan P. Merriam, *Congo: Background of Conflict* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1961), 206.
- 6 **Though a memoir** [Jack Lawson with Sully de Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel: A Green Beret's True Story of His CLASSIFIED MISSION in The Congo* (Ashland, OR: Hellgate Press, 2012)] **was ghost-written with the help of the last living participant, information contained therein that could not be corroborated with official sources will not be discussed to preclude lending credence.**
- 7 Daniel L. Haulman, "Crisis in the Congo: Operation NEW TAPE," in A. Timothy Warnock, ed., *Short of War: Major USAF Contingency Operations 1947-1997* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2000), 24-27. **The U.S. Air Force began evacuating American citizens and airlifting desperately needed food into the Congo on 8 July 1960 (Operation SAFARI). This evolved into Operation NEW HOPE in mid-July as the mission expanded to airlifting UN military peacekeeping contingents, supplies, and equipment. NEW HOPE lasted until 30 June 1964 and marked the beginning of the end for the C-124 Globemaster II. It was slower and more expensive to operate than the newly-fielded turboprop C-130 Hercules that could land and takeoff from shorter field strips. 28-29.**
- 8 Violaine I. Junod, ed., *The Handbook of Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1963), vi-vii.
- 9 George Martelli, *Leopold to Lumumba: A History of the Belgian Congo, 1877-1960* (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1962), 225-230.
- 10 David Reed, "I Saw Whites Flee the Congo," *U.S. News & World Report* (25 July 1960), 52.
- 11 "Where the Congo Goes From Here," *U.S. News & World Report* (8 August 1960), 48.
- 12 Martelli, *Leopold to Lumumba*, 231.
- 13 Martelli, *Leopold to Lumumba*, 231.
- 14 Martelli, *Leopold to Lumumba*, 224.
- 15 Reed, "Mutiny in the Congo—More Troubles Coming," *U.S. News & World Report* (18 July 1960), 51; Reed, "I Saw Whites Flee the Congo," *U.S. News & World Report* (25 July 1960), 50; **The Force Publique was composed of 24,000 African troops and 975 Belgian officers. "Analytical Chronology" [December 1960], National Security Files, Box 27, President John F. Kennedy Library, 2 of 73 pages at https://wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Congo1960-61_1.pdf accessed 2/20/2018.**
- 16 Merriam, *Congo*, 286.
- 17 Junod, *The Handbook of Africa*, 79-83.
- 18 "King Gives Up a Colony—and His Sword: Independence in the Congo," *Life* 49:2 (11 July 1960), 24.
- 19 "Summer in the Congo," *The New Republic* 242:25: 2379 (20 June 1960), 6; "Drums Along the Congo," *The Nation* 191:3 (9 July 1960), 22.
- 20 Martelli, *Leopold to Lumumba*, 241; Francis B. Stevens, "A Letter From the Congo: How Things Look in Katanga," *U.S. News & World Report* 49:54 (15 August 1960), 52.
- 21 "Analytical Chronology" [December 1960], National Security Files, Box 27, President John F. Kennedy Library, 3 of 73 pages at https://wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Congo1960-61_1.pdf accessed 2/20/2018.
- 22 Martelli, *Leopold to Lumumba*, 241; Stevens, "A Letter From the Congo: How Things Look in Katanga," *U.S. News & World Report* 49:54 (15 August 1960), 52.
- 23 Martelli, *Leopold to Lumumba*, 241; Stevens, "A Letter From the Congo: How Things Look in Katanga," *U.S. News & World Report* 49:54 (15 August 1960), 52.
- 24 **The People's Friendship University of the Soviet Union (today's People's Friendship University of Russia), established on 5 February 1960, to help developing nations, was renamed Patrice Lumumba University on 22 February 1961, a month after his execution in Katanga. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the school awarded full scholarships to everyone, and the Communist Party provided subsidies for round-trip airfare, room and board, and a stipend. More than 70 percent of the 6,500 students were foreigners. Clara Germani, "Moscow's Academic Nightmare," *Baltimore Sun Journal*, 5 November 1995 at https://articles.baltimore-sun.com/1995-11-05/news/1995309007_1_patrice-lumumba-dream accessed 2/21/2018.**
- 25 Reed, "Mutiny in the Congo—More Troubles Coming," *U.S. News & World Report* (18 July 1960), 51.
- 26 Merriam, *Congo*, 286; "Where the Congo Goes From Here," *U.S. News & World Report* (8 August 1960), 48.
- 27 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009; "Analytical Chronology" [December 1960], National Security Files, Box 27, President John F. Kennedy Library, 7 and 10 of 73 pages at https://wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Congo1960-61_1.pdf accessed 2/20/2018. Ambassador Timberlake: "Cannot too greatly urge most immediate dispatch of the two companies." The US combat troops were to stabilize the situation long enough to permit the peaceful entry of other forces. When his request was answered with a Special Forces team and a light aviation task force, the U.S. ambassador stated that the refusal to send troops was being interpreted by many Congolese as U.S. sympathy for, or even complicity with, the Belgian action.
- 28 Fontaine interviews, 23 April 2009 and 22 September 2009.
- 29 Fontaine interview, 22 July 2008; Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years: A History of the U.S. Army Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 78.
- 30 Fontaine interview, 15 July 2008.
- 31 COL Sully H. Fontaine, Official Military Personnel Record, National Personnel Record Center, St. Louis, MO, hereafter cited as Fontaine, OMPR; Fontaine interview 15 July 2008. 1LT Fontaine infiltrated into Communist Hungary during the 1956 revolution while 'seconded' to another U.S. Government (USG) agency. "Visiting" his cousin, the French military attaché in Budapest, Fontaine discerned that the 'freedom fighters' were not 'patriots.' This was sufficient for COL Aaron Bank, Chief, Special Warfare Branch, G-3, USAREUR, to recommend that Special Forces not be sent into Hungary as advisors. Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009.
- 32 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009.
- 33 SFC Stefan Mazak, Official Military Personnel Record, National Personnel Record Center, St. Louis, MO, hereafter cited as OMPR, Mazak; Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009; Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 27.
- 34 Fontaine, OMPR; Fontaine interviews, 15 and 22 July 2008, 29 July 2009, 4 and 11 August 2008, and 9 January 2018.
- 35 MAJ Albert V. Clement, Official Military Personnel Record, National Personnel Record Center, St. Louis, MO, hereafter cited as Clement, OMPR.
- 36 Mazak, OMPR.
- 37 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009; Specialist Five (SP5) Stefan Mazak served with 1LT Fontaine on a 10th SFG Mobile Training Team (MTT) to the 1st Bataillon de Chasseurs Parachutistes at Calvi, Corsica, in early 1959. Mazak, who lived in France from 1932 to 1945, rose to the rank of corporal (CPL) in the French Forces of the Interior (FFI), 67th Infantry Battalion during World War II (March 1944-June 1945). He never served in the Foreign Legion. Captain (CPT) Albert V. Clement had been called 'Jake' since boyhood. He got the nickname, 'Jake the Snake,' not as a Jungle Warfare School Instructor in the Panama Canal Zone, but as the 77th SFG FB-1 Survival Demonstration Team leader. He handled 'poisonous snakes' at the Armed Forces Day demonstration in Washington, DC, in 1957. The team also gave their demonstration to an Army Security Agency officer class in Maryland and a Cub Scout troop at Fort Bragg. Clement never served in Panama nor attended the Jungle Warfare School TDY. Mazak, OMPR; Clement, OMPR. This contradicts hearsay in Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 27.
- 38 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009; Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 26-27.
- 39 Fontaine interview, 22 July 2008.
- 40 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009.
- 41 "Analytical Chronology" [December 1960], National Security Files, Box 27, President John F. Kennedy Library, 5 of 73 pages at https://wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Congo1960-61_1.pdf accessed 2/20/2018. Belgium began flying reinforcements to its retained bases in the Congo based on an unratified agreement with the new republic.
- 42 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009. Belgian commandos were securing the Ndjili Airport when the four U.S. servicemen arrived on 12 July. This contradicts Larry Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir of 1960-67* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 2007), 38, published 45 years after the events.
- 43 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009.
- 44 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009.
- 45 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009.
- 46 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009. On 1 August 1952, a new joint U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) was established. The Army's European Command (EUCOM) headquartered in Heidelberg, Germany, became U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR). USEUCOM moved to Camp des Loges, west of Paris, France, in 1954. "History, U.S. Army Europe" at <http://www.eur.army.mil/organization/history.htm> accessed 1/25/2018.
- 47 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009.
- 48 Fontaine, interview, 9 July 2008; Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 117.
- 49 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009; Larry Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir of 1960-67* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 2007), 10.
- 50 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009; The Library of Congress. American Folklife Center. Veterans History Project. "Interview with Richard Kim [6/21/2006] at <http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001/transcript?ID=mv0001> accessed 2/12/2018.
- 51 Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo*, 10. The radioman that Larry Devlin mentioned was SSgt Edward Cournoyer (ROBERT FOUR) on 1LT Fontaine's team.
- 52 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009.
- 53 Reed, "I Saw Whites Flee the Congo," *U.S. News & World Report* 49:52 (25 July 1960), 53.
- 54 Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo*, 6.
- 55 Mazak, OMPR; Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 121.
- 56 Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 122-123.

- 57 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009. 1LT Fontaine and SP5 Mazak were also recognized by a French Foreign Legion officer who had served in the 1st *Battalion de Chasseurs Parachutistes*, Calvi, Corsica, in early 1959, when the two Americans were part of a 10th SFG Mobile Training Team. He, like the Belgian commando officer at Ndjili Airport, respected their 'cover' story as French Canadian medical personnel.
- 58 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009. The 9 mm MAT-49 was the iconic military submachinegun of the French Indochina (1st Vietnam) War and fighting in Algeria. Robert Bruce, "The French MAT 49 Submachine Gun" at <http://www.smallarmsreview.com/display.article.cfm?inarticles=2508> accessed 1/26/2018.
- 59 In 1949, the Piasecki Aircraft Company in Philadelphia, PA, modified its HRP-2 *Rescuer* tandem rotor helicopter (originated from HRP-1) to create the H-21A & B *Workhorse* (Air Force) /& H-21B & C *Shawnee* (Army). Search and Air Rescue were initial roles for the H-21As. "Piasecki H-21 Workhorse/Shawnee Helicopter" at http://aviastar.org/helicopters_eng/piasecki_h-21.php accessed 1/29/2018.
- 60 Fontaine interviews, 23 April 2009 and 9 August 2017; *USAREUR History, 1953-1963*, 181; U.S. Army Detachment, Leopoldville, Republic of the Congo, Rescue Mission Report (U), 27 July 1960, Appendix to Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, hereafter cited as Rescue Mission Report.
- 61 Rescue Mission Report; *The USAREUR History Report, 1953-1963*, differs from the Rescue Mission Report in that it counted the Air Force H-21 helicopter from Wheelus Airbase, Tripoli, Libya, and that a USAREUR colonel was appointed as the EUCOM liaison officer to Ambassador Timberlake. He was to be EUCOM representative to the Congolese Government and commander of all U.S. military personnel in the African republic. However, U.S. Ambassador Timberlake was in charge of Operation ROBERT SEVEN and the Aviation Detachment (EUCOM) was directed by ROBERT ONE, SF 1LT Sully H. Fontaine. The detachment began flying missions on 14 July not 18 July. The Air Force delivery of a third helicopter was acknowledged, but it is not included in the final report by USAREUR.
- 62 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009.
- 63 Fontaine interviews, 15 July 2008 and 22 September 2009.
- 64 *USAREUR History Report, 1953-1963*, 180-181; Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009.
- 65 Rescue Mission Report; *USAREUR History Report, 1953-1963*, 181; Fontaine interviews, 23 April and 22 September 2009.
- 66 American Consulate Brazzaville Message, Subject: Breakdown of Mission Evacuations from the Congo to Brazzaville, 19 July 1960, Appendix to Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 315-316 hereafter cited as Brazzaville Consulate Report; Rescue Mission Report; Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009.
- 67 Rescue Mission Report; Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009.
- 68 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009; Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 223..
- 69 Rescue Mission Report; Brazzaville Consulate Report.
- 70 "Analytical Chronology" [December 1960], National Security Files, Box 27, President John F. Kennedy Library, 3 of 73 pages at https://wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Congo1960-61_1.pdf accessed 2/20/2018.
- 71 Reed, "I Saw Whites Flee the Congo," *U.S. News & World Report* 49:52 (25 July 1960), 50.
- 72 Ambassador Frank C. Carlucci III, interview by Briscoe, 28 July 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo*, 30. This differs with what is reported in Lawson with de Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 117.
- 73 Reed, "I Saw Whites Flee the Congo," *U.S. News & World Report* 49:52 (25 July 1960), 51-52.
- 74 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009; "White Men Flee in Terror from Chaos of the Congo," *Life* 49:10-17 (8 August 1960).
- 75 Fontaine interview, 22 September 2009.
- 76 Rescue Mission Report.
- 77 Rescue Mission Report; Fontaine interview, 22 July 2008; Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 147.
- 78 Fontaine interview, 23 April 2009; "White Men Flee in Terror from Chaos of the Congo," *Life* 49:10-17 (8 August 1960).
- 79 Rescue Mission Report. Interestingly, that incident was cited differently in the Rescue Mission Report: "VANGA: H-21 evacuated 28 persons. During flight to VANGA, made an emergency landing; repair was made on the spot. No more trouble after that."; "White Men Flee in Terror from Chaos of the Congo," *Life*, 49:10-17 (8 August 1960).
- 80 Rescue Mission Report; Fontaine interviews, 23 April and 22 September 2009.
- 81 Rescue Mission Report.
- 82 Rescue Mission Report.
- 83 Rescue Mission Report; "White Men Flee in Terror from Chaos of the Congo," *Life* 49:10-17 (8 August 1960).
- 84 Rescue Mission Report.
- 85 Rescue Mission Report; Fontaine, Clement, and Mazak, OMPR.
- 86 Rescue Mission Report.
- 87 Rescue Mission Report.
- 88 Rescue Mission Report.
- 89 Rescue Mission Report; *USAREUR History Report, 1953-1963*; Brazzaville Consulate Report. There are minor discrepancies between the reports: The total evacuated varies from 220 to 239; 58th Air Rescue Squadron, U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE) provided an H-21B *Workhorse* helicopter, aircrews, and mechanic for the mission; it is unknown whether the total mileage reportedly flown (11,435 miles) and flying hours accrued (210) included the Air Force H-21 and the fixed wing flying hours and mileage from Germany to Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa.
- 90 *USAREUR History Report, 1953-1963*.
- 91 Rescue Mission Report.
- 92 Retired Canadian Air Force Lieutenant-General W.K. 'Bill' Carr, "Book Review of 'Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping, 1960-64'" in *The Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 1:1 (Winter 2012), 84, 85.
- 93 *USAREUR History Report, 1953-1963*. COL Paulick debriefed 1LT Fontaine for several hours after his return from the Congo. Fontaine explained that his Rescue Mission Report had been heavily edited by Ambassador Timberlake. The number of bullet holes in the aircraft was reduced. He was instructed not to report or talk about any negative incidents. The report was essentially 'sterilized.' The mission was labeled a sensitive humanitarian rescue mission. Fontaine interviews, 23 April 2009, 25 July 2017, and 9 August 2017; Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, 292.
- 94 United Nations (Official Documents System) (18 July 1960). "First Report by the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution S/4387 (18 July 1960)" at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org> accessed 2/2/2018.
- 95 A. Walter Dorn, "The UN's First 'Air Force': Peacekeepers in Combat, Congo 1960-64," *Journal of Military History*, 77: 4 (October 2013), 1399 at <http://walterdorn.net/189-un-first-air-force-peacekeepers-in-combat-congo-1960-64> accessed 2/2/2018.
- 96 Carr, "Book Review of *Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping, 1960-64*, 84.
- 97 Dorn, "The UN's First 'Air Force,'" 1399-1402. UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld died on 18 September 1961. He was trying to negotiate a ceasefire between UN forces and the Katanga troops of Moïse Tshombe when his airplane crashed.
- 98 Dorn, "The UN's First 'Air Force,'" 1415.
- 99 Fontaine, Clement, and Mazak, OMPR.
- 100 Department of Army (DA) supported the State Department recommendation and overrode the recommended disapproval by the Commander-in-Chief (CINC), USAREUR (General Clyde D. Eddleman). Fontaine, OMPR; Seventh U.S. Army, USAREUR. General Order (G.O. Number 2) dated 21 January 1961), Clement and Mazak, OMPR.
- 101 Fontaine, Clement, and Mazak, OMPR.
- 102 Mazak, OMPR; Fontaine, interview, 23 April 2009; Though COL Paulick supported the USAREUR recommendation to award Army Commendation Medals (ARCOM) to the three 10th SFG soldiers, Ambassador Clare H. Timberlake was adamant that 1LT Sully H. Fontaine be awarded a Legion of Merit (LOM). He used the Flemish/French speaker to infiltrate the 'inner circle' of Premier Patrice E. Lumumba to confirm political leanings. Because the State Department was the 'supported' agency, Department of Army (DA) overruled CINCUSAREUR (GEN Clyde D. Eddleman) and directed a formal Reply by Indorsement (RBI) when the LOM was presented. DA. Office of the Adjutant General (OTAG), Letter to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Army, Europe, SUBJECT: Presentation of Award dated 27 December 1960. A formal attempt to upgrade awards for Clement and Mazak to LOMs via 'another channel' (Seventh Army Aviation Company commander) was sent to DA with 'disapproval recommended' by USAREUR. It came back rejected by DA on 10 February 1961. Mazak and Clement, OMPRs. MAJ (later COL) Robert B. Rheault, the Detachment B-1 commander, 1st Company (Prov), 10th SFG softened the rejection with a Letter of Appreciation (30 January 1961) to SP5 Mazak: "Your performance of duty in this vital assignment has materially enhanced the prestige of the U.S. Army and the SF concept. The nature of your accomplishments was recognized by the awarding of the ARCOM." Mazak, OMPR. The Legion of Merit had some effect at Department of Army concerning CPT Fontaine's application for Regular Army (RA). His date of RA commission (21 January 1961) was coincidentally the day that the LOM was presented. Fontaine was awarded a Military Police Corps (MPC) RA commission because he was the junior aide-de-camp to BG Ralph J. Butchers during the Korean War. MG Butchers was Provost Marshal General of the Army, 1960-64. Fontaine, OMPR; Fontaine interviews, 9 January and 27 February 2018; "History of The Provost Marshal General of the Army" at <https://www.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/287488.pdf> accessed 2/27/2018. Contrary to the statement in the Preface of Lawson with Fontaine, *Slaver's Wheel*, xv, "SP5 Mazak's DSC (Distinguished Service Cross) was not revoked." It never left 10th SFG. COL Paulick had been the battalion commander of 1LT Audie L. Murphy, the most decorated American soldier in WWII. Both soldiers had been awarded DSCs in WWII. As mentioned above, an LOM award did go to DA with a USAREUR recommendation of disapproval. The tasking authority for the 1960 Congo mission, USAREUR considered it to be a humanitarian rescue, not a combat operation. The mission duration was less than two weeks. In 1960 the U.S. Army had only two peacetime meritorious service awards, the ARCOM and the LOM. Rarely did anyone below colonel receive the LOM. MAJ Clement received an ARCOM as his retirement award in 1963. Clement, OMPR.
- 103 "The remarkable career of wartime fighter pilot and photographer Terry Spencer" at <http://www.dorsetmagazine.co.uk/people/the-remarkable-career-of-wartime-fighter-pilot> accessed 4/16/2018; "Terry Spencer" at <http://sparatuc-educational.com/JFKSpencer.htm> accessed 4/16/2018; "Terrence Spencer" at <https://www.worldpressphoto.org/people/terence-spencer> accessed 4/16/2018.

TRAINING ON A SHOESTRING

Cheap, Practical SF Training in the post-Vietnam Turmoil

by Charles H. Briscoe



Just after daybreak in late spring 1974, a brown and white U-10A *Super Courier* floatplane approached Mott Lake on Fort Bragg, NC. The Department of Army Civilian (DAC) instructor pilot, Mr. Jay S. Sparks, Sr. flying the U-10A, established radio contact with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) soldiers aboard their 10-man inflatable rubber assault boats (RB-10s) awaiting training. The pilot needed four key pieces of information before landing: observed helicopter activity in the area; assurance that the water landing zone (LZ) was free of underwater obstructions (down to 30 inches); verification that the lake surface was clear of floating logs, debris, or moored craft; and the wind direction and velocity. After comparing wind data with the direction and height of water ripples, Mr. Sparks deftly landed the light short takeoff/landing (STOL) airplane inside the 500 foot 'safe touchdown area,' reversed direction, and taxied to the Mott Lake 'beach.'¹ Now, the SF soldiers had to actualize tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) not addressed in Field Manual (FM) 31-20: *SF Operational Techniques*.²

The purpose of this article is to show how innovative, realistic training was accomplished despite severely constrained resources after the Vietnam War. The situation will be explained at the macro level before descending to the tactical or micro level. First came the SFG deactivations and then came the Army reductions-in-force (RIFs).

At the MACRO Level

The 1st, 3rd, and 6th SFGs had been deactivated. Several Army RIFs decimated ranks of reserve lieutenants, captains, and majors who dominated the SF officer corps, reduced Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) manning, and cut company and battalion staffs to 'bare bones.' The RIFs destroyed SF operational readiness as effectively as volleys of grapeshot. Pentagon service staffs declared common Vietnam acronyms, COIN (counterinsurgency) and UW (unconventional warfare), to be 'bad words.'³ SF companies (ODCs or C Teams) led by lieutenant colonels (LTCs) had been changed to battalions to merit O5 (pay grade) command credit. ODBs became companies led by majors who focused on rebuilding SF credibility and ODA proficiency by training to standard on individual and collective tasks.⁴ Fortunately, Air Force and Army aircrews had to maintain proficiency with ground forces.

The active, Reserve, and National Guard had annual support requirements. The appeal of SF exercises was that they were interesting, challenging, and encompassed a wide variety of missions. 'Becoming smart' on the needs and standing operating procedures (SOPs) of each service's aviation fostered the coordination of 'win-win' training activities. By taking advantage of the Army aviation units at Fort Bragg and Air Force Joint Airborne and Air Transport (JAAT) training airlift enabled 3/5th SFG to conduct quality training in the worst of times.⁵ It is hard to appreciate 'value added' without a short summary of events that contributed to this constrained resource environment, as shown in the

sidebar "A Most Tumultuous Time In Modern U.S. History, 1960-1975."

Since young soldiers reflect American society and culture, the events cited in the adjacent sidebar impacted heavily on the Army of the 1970s. Presidential decrees expanded U.S. military fighting role in South Vietnam, not a Congressional declaration of war. Stemming the spread of Communism worldwide was bipartisan national policy. By the early 1970s, 'Middle America' was tired of the heavy human cost of fighting the nation's longest war to date (more than 10 years). With Vietnam as the top priority, U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR) became a 'caretaker command.' Drug and racial issues that 'plagued' the military in Vietnam in the late 1960s led to serious disciplinary problems by the time U.S. withdrawals had begun. In Europe, Army unit leaders adopted 'peaceful coexistence' attitudes to maintain some semblance of order. When Army Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN) began flooding Europe in 1972 with Regular Army officers and career non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to rebuild operational readiness and restore order and discipline, drug and alcohol problems and racial tensions exploded.⁷

This happened as the Army was drawing down to 16 active divisions and transitioning to an all-volunteer enlisted force (VOLAR). The draft (two years mandatory military service for males) that pre-dated WWII had ended in 1972. Simultaneously, force structure, personnel, and money were reduced. The airborne on Fort Bragg was combatting drugs, racial tensions, and discipline—albeit there were fewer problems in SF with its 'triple volunteers.' Special Forces had been 'value added' to conventional Army commanders in South Vietnam until 1971 when abuses of human rights, drug trafficking, and other criminal activities came to light in 5th SFG. Reliefs of commanders and sergeants major, prison detentions pending courts martial, and the 'general lack of trust' by the senior Army commander, General (GEN) Creighton A. Abrams, caused the early return of 5th SFG and soured Army leaders for years to come. This is enough macro information to show how tumultuous conditions were in the continental United States (CONUS) by the time American armed forces were withdrawn from Southeast Asia.

At the MICRO Level

At the micro level, major changes awaited the return of 5th SFG to Fort Bragg. As the SF group moved into the Old Division area [vacated by the Vietnam-era U.S. Army Training Center (USATC)], new mission area responsibilities were assigned. The reduced 10th SFG in Germany relinquished the Middle East and Iran to focus on Russia and the Eastern Bloc countries. Since 3rd and 6th SFGs had already been deactivated, the 5th SFG assumed responsibility for Africa. It would share the Special Atomic Demolition Munition (SADM) mission with 7th SFG. Since deactivated 8th SFG assets were the core of 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG in Panama, 5th SFG with its three battalions was 'tagged' to support XVIII Airborne Corps strategic contingencies.⁸

A Most Tumultuous Time in Modern U.S. History

1960–1975



1960

After taking over Cuba the previous year, Fidel Castro formally aligns with the Soviet Union.



1961

April (Cuban Bay of Pigs fiasco) & August (Berlin Wall goes up).



1962

Cold War 'nuclear brinkmanship' – Cuban Missile Crisis.



1963

Martin Luther King's 'I Have A Dream' speech in D.C.; civil rights movement; and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.



1964

President Lyndon B. Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin Resolution leads to the introduction of Army and Marine combat divisions and separate brigades with naval and air power to fight Communism in South Vietnam.



1965

U.S.-instigated Organization of American States (OAS) intervention in the Dominican Republic to remove Communists from power.



1966–68

Black Power; race riots in Detroit, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles; the assassinations of Rev. Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy; Peoples' Army of North Vietnam (PAVN) and Viet Cong (VC) launch major offensive all over South Vietnam (Tet 1968).



1969–72

U.S. astronaut walks on Moon, drugs, 'free love,' and 'hippie' counter-cultures; radical anarchist and environmental groups; student 'sit-ins'; draft card & U.S. flag burnings protest Vietnam War and established government; feminism, women's and gay rights; Red Power; Watergate break-in.



1973–75

Lotteries precede abolition of draft (universal military service) for men, 'Peace with Honor' = Vietnam exit strategy; the *Pentagon Papers*; resignation of Vice President Spiro T. Agnew; resignation of President Richard F. Nixon in his second term; and fall of Saigon = Communist Vietnam.⁶

The post-Vietnam SFGs initially consisted of four battalions: three SF battalions; and a support battalion. MILPERCEN command-selected officers for SF battalions.⁹ The CONUS special warfare units, originally assigned to U.S. Army Continental Army Command (CONARC) in 1955, transferred to U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) in 1973, while U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) assumed control of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance (CENMA). A joint U.S. Readiness Command (REDCOM), formed in 1972, was to evaluate the operational readiness of all military services with large joint exercises.¹⁰ The Army had been looking to the future long before U.S. forces began withdrawing from Vietnam.¹¹ To preserve the strength of the Army units phasing out of Southeast Asia, assigned officers were not factored in RIFs. That changed dramatically after the units returned to CONUS. At the macro level, the SF battalions and companies in 5th SFG suffered mightily.

Shortly after 'being piled high' with operational missions

“It was crazy... We lost talent, but more importantly, combat experience. 5th SFG was left reeling.”

— LTC 'Ted' Mataxis Jr (Ret)

from the newly established commands in the States, the 'RIF gun' was fired point blank at the 5th SFG. The few Regular Army officers assigned to the 5th were astonished by the impact. "One day I was the executive officer on an ODA and the next day I was the detachment commander," recalled the former 1st Infantry Division commander, retired Brigadier General (BG) David L. Grange. "When Captain (CPT) 'Ted' (Theodore C.) Mataxis and I came back from a pre-mission trip to Iran, we learned that he was a company commander and I had my own ODA."¹² "It was crazy. Some of the best officers with whom I had ever served were 'out on the street.' Most of the guys who had come up from the ranks via OCS (Officer Candidate School) or gotten direct commissions lacked sufficient 'officer' time (10 years) to revert back to NCOs to retire at twenty years with the pay of their highest rank achieved. Few had college degrees. We lost talent, but more importantly, combat experience.

5th SFG was left reeling," said retired LTC 'Ted' Mataxis Jr., who was ordered stateside after three years in Vietnam.¹³

However, the Army is good at 'shoring up' its assets, refocusing, and continuing the mission; 5th SFG proved no exception. 'Contingencies for contingences' were commonly planned. The 7th SFG provided personnel 'fillers' to 3rd Battalion, 5th SFG to meet the 100% 'standing alert' requirements tied to XVIII Airborne Corps strategic contingency missions.¹⁴ "Verifying the availability of the 7th SFG augmentees, name by name, was a weekly drill. They had missions in Latin America to perform," recalled retired Colonel (COL) 'Rod' (Jim Roddy) Paschall, the 3/5th SFG commander. "I had lieutenants commanding most SF ODAs. The more experienced captains became SF company commanders (ODBs). MILPERCEN filled officer shortages with 'draftees.' Most of the non-volunteers were second lieutenants (2LTs) straight from their basic branch courses who did airborne training enroute to Fort Bragg. Lieutenant (LT) ODA Executive Officers (XOs) were a luxury."¹⁵

Retired Colonel 'Mark' (Francis Mark Douglas) Boyatt, a former 3rd SFG commander, stated: "I was a newly promoted captain in the Infantry Officers Advanced Course (IOAC) at Fort Benning when I was told by my MILPERCEN assignment officer that I was going to Special Forces at Fort Bragg. My first assignment as a lieutenant had been 'high adventure.' I was a mechanized infantry platoon leader and company XO in Germany. Every day we faced drug problems, dealt with alcohol in the barracks, and racial threats. With loaded .45 cal pistols in hand and bunk (bed) adapters (see description in endnote 16), we 'patrolled' the barracks at night with our platoon sergeants, alternating the lead going into rooms. In 'Three-Five' (3rd Bn, 5th SFG) the non-SF qualified wore 'candy stripes' instead of flashes on our berets until they finished the 'Q' Course. The ODAs were about 70 percent filled 'on paper.'"¹⁶ After the RIFs Vietnam officer veterans were welcomed to SF.

The CENMA (also called the Center) Flight Detachment at Fort Bragg was filled with Vietnam veterans—warrant and commissioned officer aviators from various branches had all kinds of experience. They were flying a variety of aircraft. The original inventory of the 22nd Special Warfare Aviation Detachment (SWAD) from the early 1960s had been significantly reduced. Gone were the U-1A *Otter*, U-6A *Beaver*, and twin engine CV-2 *Caribou* STOL airplanes as well as the OH-23 *Raven* helicopters. Four U-10A *Super Courier* STOL aircraft, a WWII-era C-47 *Skytrain*, a 1939 twin-engine C-45 *Expeditor*, and eight UH-1D *Iroquois* (Huey) helicopters that belonged to the flight detachments of the 5th and 7th SFGs remained at the time. A new addition was several T-42 Beechcraft *Baron* twin-engine airplanes.¹⁷ It was August 1972 when CPT Jerold L. Jensen reported to the Center Flight Detachment following his second tour in Vietnam (see Thumbnail Biography in Sidebar).¹⁸

Demands on the Center Flight Detachment officers and warrant officers proved to be light. Senior pilots in both groups chose to maintain minimums with administrative

“I saw how hard the RIF hit the young Warrant Officers in the flight detachment and knew that SF officers at Fort Bragg had been hammered.”

— LTC Jerold L. Jensen (Ret)

flying missions in their ‘preferred’ aircraft. They were accumulating flight hours that would improve their resumes for post-retirement flying jobs. Though most of the commissioned aviators had served two tours in Vietnam, the younger pilots took advantage of the situation to get rated in other aircraft while building hours and expanding their experience flying operational missions.¹⁹

However, as much as they loved flying, they were still junior commissioned officers. All of them understood that further promotion and career progression required branch qualification (company command) and higher education—military and civilian. As the detachment XO, CPT Jensen got rated in the twin-engine C-45 and the STOL U-10A, accumulated hours, and gained considerable operational experience in those aircraft during his eighteen month assignment. After discovering that he ‘was not in the running’ to command the detachment after being selected for Major (MAJ), he chose to return to his ‘first love,’ Special Forces. “I saw how hard the RIF hit the young Warrant Officers in the flight detachment and knew that SF officers at Fort Bragg had been hammered,” said retired LTC Jensen. “I called and made an appointment to see LTC Clarence R. Stearns, Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO), 5th SFG in December 1973.”²⁰

The promotable captain had more than a ‘Q’ Course diploma. The former Quartermaster Corps officer had been the 19th SFG Parachute Rigger Officer, the Headquarters & Headquarters Detachment (HHD) Commander, and Battalion S-3, 1st Battalion, 19th SFG before applying for active duty as an Infantry officer in early 1968. CPT Jensen wanted ‘to get into the war.’ After three months as S-4, Company C, 5th SFG in Vietnam (RVN), CPT Jensen replaced the ODA 105 commander at Nong Song, just inland from the Laotian border (I Corps Tactical Zone). He spent nine months advising and directing three Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) ‘striker’ companies engaged in fighting Communist Viet Cong (VC) and Peoples’ Army of Vietnam [PAVN = North Vietnamese Army (NVA)] elements infiltrating the South via the Ho Chi



LTC Jerold L. Jensen (QM, IN, AVN, SF)

- **DOB:** 23 July 1939
- **POB:** Salina, UT
- **HS:** 1957, Olympus HS, Salt Lake City, UT
- **Feb 57:** BPED, UT ANG 115th Engr Gp
- **Jul 57:** BCT, Ft Ord, CA
- **Jun 61:** Engr AIT, Ft Leonard Wood, MO, OCS, Ft Benning, GA
- **Sep 61:** Reserve Commission QMC, Abn Tng, Ft Benning, GA
- **1961:** QM Officers Basic & Parachute Maint & Air Delivery Course, Ft Lee, VA
- **1961–68:** 1/19th SFG UT ANG, Rigger Officer, HHC Cdr, Bn S3, BA, Utah State Univ (**1965**), applied for Active Duty as Infantry officer
- **Mar–Aug 1968:** BCT Bn S-3, Ft Benning, GA
- **Aug 68–Nov 68:** C Co, 5th SFG, CPT, Danang, RVN, S-4 & PBO
- **Nov 68–Aug 69:** ODA 105 Cdr, Nong Song, RA CPT
- **1970:** IOAC 4-70, Ft Benning, GA
- **Jan–Jul 71:** Fixed Wing Flt School, Ft Rucker, AL & Ft Stewart, GA
- **Aug 71–Aug 72:** USARV Cmd Avn Co (U-21), Long Than North, RVN, Ops Officer, AC, Plt Ldr, CPT
- **Aug 72–Jan 74:** USAJFKCENMA Flt Det, Ft Bragg, NC, XO (C-45, T-42, U-10A), CPT/MAJ
- **Jan 74–Jun 77:** A Co Cdr & Bn S-3, 3/5th SFG, Ft Bragg, NC
- **Jul 77–Jun 78:** USACGSC, Ft Leavenworth, KS
- **Jun 78–Jun 81:** UT ANG Avn Advisor (R/W transition, UH-1D & UH-1C Huey, AG-1C Cobra, Ft Rucker, AL), LTC
- **Jun 81–Jun 83:** Chief, CS Coord Tm, CUWTF, ROK
- **Jun 83–Jun 88:** DA, DCSOPS, DAMO-ODSO SF Branch Chief, LTC
- **Jun 88–Jan 89:** Sr Army Advisor, UT ANG
- **Jan 89–May 90:** Deputy Post Commander, Ft Douglas, UT
- **May 90–Dec 91:** Commander, Ft Douglas, UT
- **Jan 92:** LTC, retired

Minh Trail network. LTC Stearns accepted the 'walk on' field grade officer volunteer and sent Jensen to 3rd Battalion for company command. MAJ Jensen took command of Company A in January 1974.²¹

MAJ Jensen planned to take advantage of his Army aviation skills and Center Flight Detachment connections and use Air Force Joint Army Air Tactical (JAAT) training airplanes. He wanted to improve individual and ODA collective skills and proficiency in air operations—tactical parachute insertions, resupply bundle drops, and long distance air movement by training cheaply with Army and Air National Guard elements, first in Utah, and then Puerto Rico. But, coordinating JAAT airlift and Guard support took time. Fort Bragg had plenty of Army airplanes and training areas with lakes. Using these assets, in particular, the U-10A *Super Courier*, for SF water operations proved to be relatively simple.²²

While assigned to the Center Flight Detachment MAJ Jensen enjoyed and became quite proficient flying the single-engine, float-mounted U-10A *Super Courier* from Smith Lake adjacent to Simmons Army Airfield. It was not difficult landing the STOL airplane in the tight confines of the calm lake, but take-off required a special technique—

creating waves to break the viscosity of the water that supported the half-submerged hollow floats. Air spaces in the troughs between waves plus applying maximum engine power while perpendicular to the ridges would break the viscosity effects by allowing air to fill the gap to gain lift. The lake water vibrations sometimes caused heads wearing face masks to pop to the surface; revealing that an SF SCUBA team was underwater without a marker buoy.²⁴ The *Super Courier* was ideal to introduce 3/5th SFG teams to floatplane insertions, emergency resupply, and personnel extractions from a water LZ. The specifications required for the U-10A were covered in FM 31-20: *SF Operational Techniques*.²⁵

While training was initially set up for A Company, LTC 'Rod' Paschall expanded the scope to 'all available' to man enough ten-man rubber boats (RB-10s) to mark the water LZ. Outboard motors were not part of the equipment for rubber inflatables in 1974. Men would paddle to maneuver the boats. MAJ Jensen planned to give the U-10A water operations orientation class after Mr. Sparks flew the U-10A onto Mott Lake. He had to first brief the Recovery Committee Leader (RCL) and his boat crew on their duties and responsibilities. They needed a compass, anemometer,



LEFT Infantry CPT Harvey S. Browne, IV stands on the Smith Lake dock beside the U-10A on floats. He is wearing a Type B-4 'Mae West' inflatable life preserver.

BELOW Company A mustered for the 3/5th SFG Annual General Inspection (AGI) conducted by the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center. It was a far cry from the Vietnam ODB strength three years prior.



U-10A SUPER COURIER

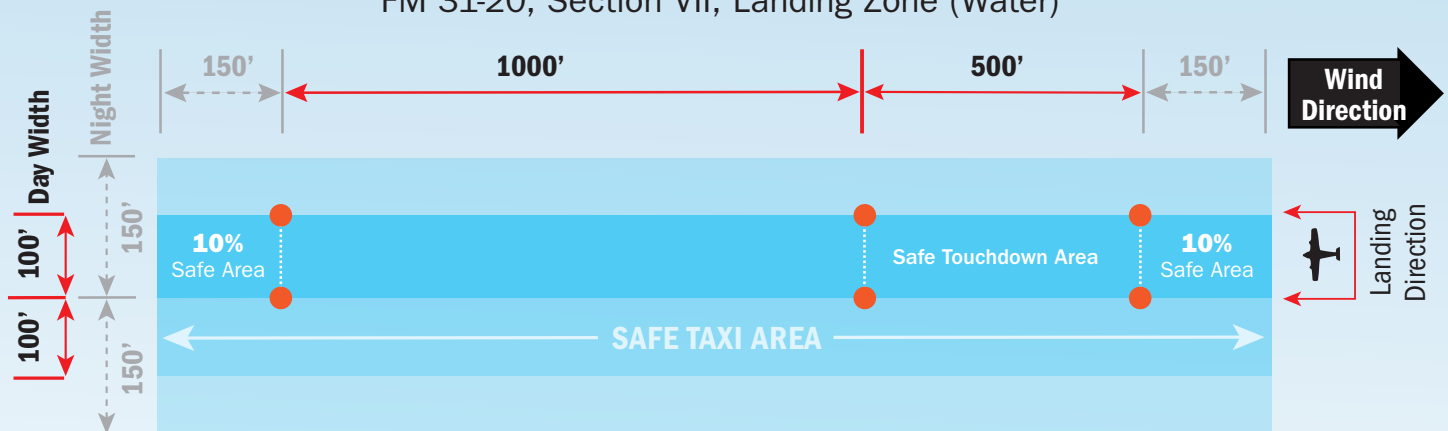
"The U-10A was the most highly sophisticated STOL airplane made. The Super Courier was way ahead of its time." — LTC Jerold 'Jerry' L. Jensen (Ret)

The U-10A *Super Courier*, a light STOL utility aircraft, was manufactured in Pittsburg, Kansas, by the Helio Aircraft Company. Powered by a Lycoming G0-480-G1D6 cylinder, 295 horsepower engine, it could carry 1,320 pounds at a maximum speed of 170 miles per hour (148 knots), travel 1,380 miles with 120 gallons of fuel (large tank), and fly at a ceiling of 20,500 feet. The all-aluminum-clad airframe supported cantilever wings with leading edge slats that deployed automatically between 55-60 mph. The slats, the high-lift slotted flaps comprising 78% of the wings' trailing edges, and interrupter blades atop the wings contributed to its outstanding STOL capability and permitted stall/spin-proof controllable flight. With its minimum-control speed of 28 mph, the U-10A was perfectly suited for confined, unimproved field operations. From 1962 to the late 1970s it was used by the CIA, Air Force, and Army for liaison, light cargo and aerial supply drops, psychological warfare, forward air control, insertion and extraction—land and water with floats—and reconnaissance. The Air Force Air Commandos flew B and D models in Vietnam while Army U-10As were assigned to Panama (8th SFG), Germany (10th SFG), Fort Bragg, NC (5th and 7th SFGs), and the 19th and 20th SFGs (ARNG).²³



Water Landing Zone Markings Light/Special Light Aircraft

FM 31-20, Section VII, Landing Zone (Water)



● Markings are optional, but desired.

Developing TTPs to set up, operate, and dismantle a water LZ without being detected by the enemy or sympathizers required considerable practice in daytime and probably three times as much to do so successfully at night.



TOP MAJ 'Jerry' Jensen, sans flight suit, presented the float plane orientation to 3/5th SFG personnel. The DAC instructor pilot, Mr. Jay S. Sparks, Sr. is wearing the flight suit.

MIDDLE 3/5th SFG personnel with RB-10 rubber boats beached watch the landing of the U-10A *Super Courier* float plane.

BOTTOM On shore the height of the float struts reveals the difficulty in boarding the airplane from a bobbing RB-10.

and PRC-77 radio to communicate data to the pilot. Jensen provided the radio frequency and call signs. The weather forecast was good for the daytime training.²⁶

After landing, Mr. Sparks taxied the *Super Courier* to the Mott Lake 'beach' area and shut off the engine. When the tri-bladed propeller stopped spinning, the RCL sent a handful of men into the water to beach the aircraft. Before his orientation class MAJ Jensen encouraged everyone to look into the cockpit and to practice climbing aboard the floats and then into the crew area via the cargo door on the right side of the fuselage. The SF soldiers soon discovered that the U-10A was considerably higher on floats and strength and agility were key to getting into the aircraft. It was not easy. MAJ Jensen explained that the task would be harder from the water. Clambering onto the aircraft float from the bobbing, drifting RB-10 would also make the airplane rock. Clambering inside would make the moving airplane rock more. Actually doing it on Mott Lake turned the SF soldiers into believers. The diagrams in the manual made it appear simple.²⁷

The U-10A floatplane training confirmed that only TTPs can turn conceptual doctrine into operational capability. It revealed the impracticality and ineffectiveness of some WWII OSS precepts. The training on Mott Lake provided a good 'change of pace'; it was interesting and somewhat fun. But, none of the leaders requested better water ops equipment, nor submitted changes to manuals.²⁸ JAAT training arranged with the Air Force and National Guard proved more relevant and best supported operational training.

JAAT airlift helped both services meet training proficiency standards and enabled the 3/5th SFG to do winter and mountain exercises in the mountains of Utah and Idaho, desert training in Texas and New Mexico, jungle training in the *El Junque* rain forest of Puerto Rico, and UW exercises in Georgia and Mississippi. 19th SFG friends were amenable and their support (vehicles and equipment) was invaluable. Adventurous aviators in the Center Flight Detachment coordinated the transport of a 5th SFG Flight Platoon UH-1D *Iroquois* (*Huey*) to Puerto Rico via JAAT. A little helicopter support to the Guard paid big dividends. MAJ Jensen's experience as 19th SFG Rigger and Air Transportability Officer was invaluable. He was comfortable working with Air Force loadmasters and flight engineers and tailored JAAT missions to fulfill aircrew proficiency requirements, i.e., two separate airdrop missions vice one with multiple passes. C-ration meals could be legally supplemented. There were few bounds to creativity.²⁹

SUMMARY

In summation, while the post-Vietnam Army was fraught with racial, drug, and alcohol problems at the macro level, SF had fewer. The continued existence of Special Forces was in serious jeopardy after its self-inflicted Vietnam War travesties. Fortunately, the contributions made in the early years were remembered by enough senior Army leaders to

save a reduced capability. ‘Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes,’ Operations JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY in Panama (1989-1990) and the COIN success in El Salvador (1981-1992) restored confidence among Army leaders. SF ably supported conventional forces in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM (1990-1991) and was given the lead in OEF, and continues to support operations in Afghanistan, the Philippines, Iraq, and Syria today.

At the micro level, Special Forces capitalized on the ‘lean’ times between Vietnam and Panama to rebuild individual and unit readiness, get ‘in synch’ with the conventional Army and joint operations, and validate its preparedness for combat.³⁰ Beginning is always tough, and the 3/5th SFG endured its unpopularity, adjusted, and persevered in a limited resources environment. Getting ‘back to the basics’ the battalion and company commanders were reminded that Army Field Manuals (FMs) contain doctrine, tactics, and proselytize theoretical capabilities. The SF officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of 3/5th SFG relearned that TTPs can only be developed by hardworking soldier-leaders in practical field exercises in daytime and at night. Just because a capability ‘looks sexy’ in a manual or a motion picture does not mean that it is practical, viable, or worth sustaining today, even though it was advocated during WWII. ⬆

CHARLES H. BRISCOE, PhD

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations in Latin America, the Congo, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

- 1 Retired LTC Jerold L. Jensen, interviews 5 January and 19 June 2017 by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; U.S. Army, Field Manual (FM) 31-20: *Special Forces Operational Techniques* (Washington, DC: Department of Army, February 1971), 6-34-41, hereafter cited as FM 31-20.
- 2 FM 31-20, 6-34-41.
- 3 Retired MG James A. Guest, 7 June 2017, interview by Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 4 Retired COL Jim Roddy ‘Rod’ Paschall, 31 January and 7 February 2017, interviews by Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 5 Jensen interview, 5 January 2017.
- 6 Richard W. Stewart, editor, *American Military History*, Vol. II: *The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 2009), 251-254, 256, 259, 263, 264, 266, 277 and Chapters 10-12.
- 7 Retired COL Francis Gary Mark ‘Mark’ Boyatt, 30 December 2018, interview by Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 8 Jensen interview, 29 December 2016; Paschall interviews, 31 January and 7 February 2017; Retired BG David L. Grange, 18 October 2016, interview by Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter after cited by name and date; retired LTC Theodore C. Mataxis Jr., 13 and 27 January 2014, interviews by Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. “The SADM mission effectively ‘killed’ one ODA. Though I required everyone in the company to maintain nuclear surety standards to balance the load, it was still a ‘Go-No Go’ mission. Failing a Technical Proficiency Inspection (TPI) would result in multiple reliefs—the group, battalion, company, and ODA commanders,” stated retired LTC ‘Jerry’ Jensen. Jensen interview, 17 July 2017.
- 9 Guest interviews, 27 June 2017 and 12 July 2017; “The SFG commander chose the Support Battalion commander. It was incentive for those lieutenant colonels not

Fixed-Wing Water LZ Training TAKE AWAY

What did the SF soldiers and leaders of 3/5th SFG take away from their fixed-wing water LZ training in the spring of 1974?

1. They were not trained or prepared to conduct fixed-wing water LZ operations. It took all day to do an orientation and practice a few basic skills.
2. It was no simple task to climb aboard a *Super Courier* and get into the crew compartment on the water. The U-10A rarely carried a crewman to assist.
3. The SF soldiers in shorts, t-shirts, and tennis shoes had to paddle like crazy to keep the RB-10 alongside the idling airplane whose spinning propeller pulled it forward at 6-7 mph. And, weapons, radios, and rucksacks were not in the rubber boats.
4. This relatively unpracticed WWII concept was not worth the time and resources necessary to develop and sustain as a capability. It was an impractical ‘novelty’ insertion/recovery system rarely used by the OSS. Its fancifulness was hyped by the motion picture industry.
5. SF boat operation capabilities in 1974 were no better than those of WWII. Yet, British WWII Commando kayak training would be promulgated by SWCS through the 1980s.
6. It would require a tremendous amount of time, dedicated manpower, and air coordination to conduct practical work with amphibians or seaplanes to develop viable TTPs to set up, operate, and dismantle a fixed-wing water LZ in daylight let alone at night.
7. SF Leaders must question the viability and practicality of SF doctrine, missions, and concepts promulgated in FMs. Updates tend to be ‘cut and paste’ with little analysis or common sense applied. SF capabilities must be constantly and objectively validated to maintain relevancy. Ask the question: Is it outdated or irrelevant?
8. While motorized inflatable boats would speed the clearing of water LZs, facilitate staying up with an ‘idling’ aircraft, and keep LZ marker boats in position, the engine noise would reduce stealth and attract enemy agents and/or forces.
9. Sophisticated air defenses—air and mobile ground—and rotary-wing aircraft relegated single and twin-engine fixed-wing airplane tactical and operational missions to history. Transport and resupply were not categorized as operational in Vietnam, let alone today.

- selected for SF battalion command and improved one's chances the second time around," commented retired LTC 'Ted' Mataxis. Mataxis interview, 17 July 2017.
- 10 Henry G. Gole, *General William E. DePuy: Preparing the Army for Modern War* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2008), 228.
 - 11 Gole, *General William E. Dupuy*, 218.
 - 12 Grange interview; 18 October 2016; Mataxis interviews, 13 and 27 January 2014.
 - 13 Mataxis interview, 27 January 2014..
 - 14 Jensen interview, 29 December 2016; Paschall interview, 7 February 2017.
 - 15 Paschall interview, 7 February 2017..
 - 16 **Bunk adapters were two-foot-long iron pipe connectors used to convert single beds into bunk beds in the barracks.** Boyatt interview, 30 December 2016.
 - 17 Jensen interview, 29 December 2016; retired LTC Allen D. 'Skip' Butler, 12 April 2016, interview by Briscoe, USASOC History Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
 - 18 Jensen interview, 15 December 2016.
 - 19 Jensen interview, 15 December 2016.
 - 20 Jensen interviews, 15 and 29 December 2016.
 - 21 Jensen interview, 15 December 2016.
 - 22 Jensen interviews, 15 and 29 December 2016; LTC Harvey S. Browne IV interviews, 23 June, 29 August, 8 and 13 December 2016, hereafter cited by name and date.
 - 23 Jensen interview; 19 June 2017; Browne interviews, 23 June, 29 August, 8 and 13 December 2016 interviews; "Helio Courier H-250" at https://www.revolv.com/main/index.php?s=Helio%20Courier%20H-250&item_type=topic (accessed 1/23/2017); "U-10 Helio Courier Was Unsung Hero in Vietnam" at <http://www.defensemecanetwork.com/stories/u-10-helio-courier-was-unsung-hero-in-vietnam> (accessed 7/14/2016); "Helio Courier H-295/395/391, 1955-78," *Plane & Pilot* (16 April 2010) at <http://www.planeandpilotmag.com/article/helio-courier-h-295-395-391> (accessed 1/23/2017); "Helio Aircraft" at http://www.helioaircraft.com/aboutus_history.htm (accessed 1/23/2017); "FlyHelio" <http://flyhelio.com/smf/index.php?topic=3070> (accessed 1/23/2017); "U-10A Courier" at <http://www.hurlburt.af.mil/DesktopModules/ArticleCS/Print.aspx?PortalId=84&ModuleId> (accessed 7/14/2017).
 - 24 Jensen interviews, 15 and 29 December 2016.
 - 25 Jensen interviews, 15 and 29 December 2016; FM 31-20, 6-34-41.
 - 26 Jensen interviews, 15 and 29 December 2016; FM 31-20, 6-34-41.
 - 27 Jensen interviews, 15 and 29 December 2016; FM 31-20, 6-34-41.
 - 28 Jensen interview, 19 June 2017; Butler interview, 12 April 2016.
 - 29 Jensen interviews, 15 and 29 December 2016.
 - 30 Guest interviews, 27 June 2017 and 12 July 2017.



Feasibility should not override survivability, viability and common sense. Exceptional use in WWII does not justify dedicating resources to sustain a capability today or tomorrow.

A black and white photograph of soldiers in a trench. In the foreground, a soldier is bent over, working with a shovel. To his right, another soldier is kneeling, looking down. In the background, a third soldier stands, looking towards the camera. The trench is filled with dirt and debris. A red overlay covers the left side of the image, containing the title text.

CATALYST FOR ACTION

The Palawan Massacre

Michael E. Krivdo

After three years of brutal captivity under the Japanese, the 150 American inmates of prisoner of war (POW) Camp 10-A on the western Philippine island of Palawan had developed an instinct for recognizing the abnormal. For several months in late 1944 the Palawan POWs had worked hard to build a runway for the Japanese Army. Lately, their duties included repairing damage caused by almost daily U.S. bombing attacks.¹ As 1944 came to an end, many of the prisoners noticed changes in the demeanor of their guards. The Japanese had become increasingly short-tempered and imposed cruel punishments for the slightest of infractions. On the morning of 14 December 1944, the POWs' sense of dread reached new heights.²

This short article reveals the details behind an incident that pushed military leaders in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) to plan action to prevent similar occurrences. The Palawan Massacre so horrified senior leaders that references to the atrocity were kept classified to maintain high morale among the forces preparing to invade the Philippines.³

Despite these precautions, word spread quickly as evidence of the incident and others just as grisly. Leaders decided to act and to rescue prisoners, detainees, and internees from similar fates.

On that fateful morning of 14 December the guards roused the prisoners at 0200 hours, far earlier than normal. At the airfield before work the POWs saw more guards than usual. Many chalked it up to pre-invasion jitters because the Allies had been bombing Japanese bases in preparation of an invasion. The laborers were ordered to repair damage and improve the airstrip. As he was working to fill a bomb crater, Marine Corporal (CPL) Rufus W. Smith turned to his long-time friend, CPL Glenn W. McDole, and said, "Something is going on, Dole. What the hell do you think is happening?"⁴ As they labored under the rising hot sun, other POWs wondered as well.

At 1100 hours the guards signaled a sudden halt to work and began roughly herding the prisoners toward one side of the runway. There, atop a small wooden box stood a familiar Japanese officer, Lieutenant Yoshikazu

Signal Corps photo of the entrance to Camp 10-A, Puerta Princesa, Palawan, Philippine Islands, taken after the island had been retaken by American Forces. Camp 10-A was the site of a brutal massacre of 139 American prisoners of war (POWs) on 14 December 1944.



View from inside the camp looking out to the main entrance. Prisoners were often tied to the 'torture trees' that lined the road.



**All photos in this article are from the National Archives.*



View of the inside of one of the POW barracks at Camp 10-A, Palawan. Photo taken after U.S. occupation of the island.

Sato. Sato, known to the prisoners as the 'Buzzard,' waited until his guards had formed the prisoners in ranks. Then, he ominously announced, "Americans, your working days are over!" With that abrupt announcement, the guards herded the prisoners onto waiting trucks.⁵

Shortly after arriving at Camp 10-A an air raid alarm sounded. As sirens wailed, armed guards shoved and prodded the POWs into three long, shallow trenches covered with coconut logs, palm fronds, and earth. The prisoners had been forced to build these bunkers several weeks earlier to protect themselves from allied air attacks. The shelters had small openings at each end and held about 40-50 men. In earlier attacks the prisoners casually occupied the makeshift shelters and stayed until the 'all clear' was sounded. This time the guards roughly herded the prisoners into the covered trenches though there was no sign of air attack. Everything seemed more chaotic than before. The guards seemed very stressed and short-tempered. For more than an hour angry sentries stood guard striking any prisoners attempting to look out. They used rifles, bayonets, and swords to club them back.⁶ Marine Corps Sergeant (SGT) Douglas W. Bogue said, "This was the first time that they ever forced us under cover...in [previous] air raids they never bothered about us."⁷ Clearly something was up.

Then, all of a sudden five guards carrying buckets hurried to Shelter A (see map) and poured gasoline into the tunnel entrances. Two others threw lighted torches into the opening and the tightly packed POWs were trapped in a raging inferno. Incredulously, seven of the POWs broke

free. With skin and clothes afire, they screamed and clawed their way to the open air. A Japanese officer ordered a machine gunner to fire on them. Then other guards moved forward and fired their rifles into the shelter. Dead and dying prisoners blocking the entrances trapped the others in the flames.⁸ At the entrance of Shelter C, Marine SGT Rufus W. Smith saw what was happening and shouted: "They're murdering the men in 'A' Company pit [Shelter A]!"⁹ Horrified prisoners watching from the entranceways of the other trenches relayed that information to those jammed inside.

As the Japanese guards moved to set fire to Shelter B, the prisoners in Shelter C used their hands and fingers to dig furiously into the rocks and dirt at the end of the hole nearest the perimeter fence where cliffs dropped to the beach. Fortunately, the POWs who built that shelter had dug the trench close to the fence, stopping just short of the cliff abutment that dropped fifty to sixty feet to the rock-strewn shore below. Some far-sighted POWs with escape in mind had loosened the dirt and gravel at that end of the trench near the fence. The doomed men dug like crazed moles since their very lives depended on breaking out. The agonized screams of their dying comrades in other trenches drove their efforts.¹⁰

As described by U.S. Navy Radioman First Class Fern J. Barta, "Three soldiers, one Marine, and I crawled out of the shelter and under the fence. After I had gotten out I looked back and saw a Jap[anese] soldier throw a lighted torch into our shelter. Another [Japanese soldier] threw a bucket of gasoline on top of the torch. This set fire to the entire shelter."¹¹

“They’re murdering the men in ‘A’ Company pit [Shelter A]!”

— Marine Sergeant Rufus W. Smith



1

1 Medical personnel excavate bodies of American soldiers from Shelter A.



2

2 Photo of recovery effort as the bodies of murdered soldiers were excavated from Shelter B.

“The first six men out of the Palawan camp had helped save more than thirty-six hundred other POW lives.”

— Stephen L. Moore, Palawan Massacre researcher and author¹⁴



Recovery operations underway at Camp 10-A. U.S. officers and medical personnel examine remains of American POWs killed in the Palawan Massacre. The investigators are looking for anything that might help in the identification of the victims.

everything and gave out all of the information we knew,” said Marine CPL Eugene Nielsen.¹⁷ Other survivors were later delivered by guerrilla forces.

As befitting a massacre on this scale, the Allies thoroughly examined the site. On 28 February 1945, troops of the U.S. Eighth Army conducted an assault landing on Palawan during Operation VICTOR III. By 2 March American forces controlled most of the island and hunted down Japanese stragglers with the enthusiastic help of Philippine guerrillas.¹⁸ It is believed that many of the massacre perpetrators died in that fighting.¹⁹ Of the sixteen Japanese soldiers brought to trial for the massacre after the war, six were acquitted and ten received sentences from five to thirty years in prison. However, all were released in a general amnesty granted in 1958. As researcher Stephen L. Moore lamented, “the end results could not have been more lenient.”²⁰

Most importantly, because eleven men survived the massacre to confirm the ordeal, American military leaders realized the imminent threat to other POWs and detainees. Senior commanders were determined to prevent more atrocities. With several thousand American and Allied lives at stake, the rescue of POWs and internees became a high priority.²¹ And after the overwhelming success of the Cabanatuan rescue (article in the next issue), three more raids were done in short

succession, freeing over 7,000 POWs and detainees in less than a month.²² ▲

MICHAEL E. KRIVDO, PhD

Michael Krivdo earned his PhD in Military and Diplomatic History from Texas A&M University. He is a former Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Officer with varied special operations research interests.

Endnotes

- 1 According to Stephen L. Moore, *As Good as Dead: The Daring Escape of American POWs from a Japanese Death Camp* (New York: Caliber, 2016), 137-42.
- 2 Interview with Eugene [Peter] Nielsen, *Utah World War II Stories*, interviewed by Geoffrey Panos, 24 January and 20 April 2006 (hereafter “Nielsen Interview”), Salt Lake City, UT; Bob Wilbanks, *Last Man Out: Glenn McDole, USMC, Survivor of the Palawan Massacre in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Publishers, 2004), 111.
- 3 Initial reports of the massacre were classified at the Top Secret level, and survivors were cautioned not to publicly disclose any details of the event until properly authorized by military investigators.
- 4 Quote from Wilbanks, *Last Man Out*, 111. Corporals McGone and Smith had served together since before the attack on Pearl Harbor, were captured with the 4th Marine Regiment at Corregidor, and survived the ‘Bataan Death March.’
- 5 Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 154; Wilbanks, *Last Man Out*, 111, quote as noted in Oral History Interview with Glen McDole (OH 1317), 10 October 1996, interviewed by William J. Alexander hereafter “McDole Interview”), University of North Texas Oral History Collection, Denton, TX.
- 6 McDole Interview; Wilbanks, *Last Man Out*, 112-14; Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 154-56; Document 2869, General Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, Staff Judge Advocate, War Crimes Branch, “Subject: Report of War Crimes Branch on Atrocities,” 18 August 1945, copy in USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.

General of the Army (GEN) Douglas A. MacArthur and members of his staff visit the site of the Palawan Massacre. The mass execution at Palawan triggered several rescue operations to ensure similar massacres did not take place.



Major POW/Detainee Rescue Operations Luzon, Philippines / 1945

Cabanatuan Rescue	30 January	516 POWs
Santo Tomas Prison	3 February	3,500 detainees/275 hostages
Bilibid Prison	4 February	700 + POWs/ 500 internees
Los Banos Rescue	23 February	2,147 Allied POWs



The Army reinterred 123 of the soldiers murdered in the Palawan Massacre with full military honors. In 1952, the bodies were relocated from Palawan to a communal grave in Section 85 of the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, MO.

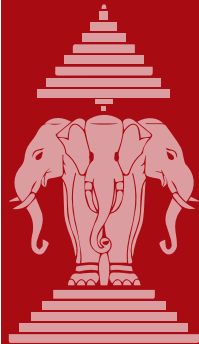
- 7 Statement of Sergeant Douglas W. Bogue, U.S. Marine Corps, Document No. 8259, Washington, DC, 17 February 1945, Folder, "Palawan Massacre"; Box 2, Entry 3, Record Group (RG) 125, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD (hereafter "Bogue Statement"), 1.
- 8 Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 159-61; Wilbanks, *Last Man Out*, 114-15.
- 9 Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Area, "Escape and Evasion Report No. 23," 15 February 1945, Folder, "Palawan POW Camp," Box 5, Entry 10, RG 24, NARA, College Park, MD, quote from statement of Corporal Glenn W. McDole, 14.
- 10 McDole Interview; Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 161-63; Wilbanks, *Last Man Out*, 115-16; Nielsen Interview.
- 11 Statement of Fern Joseph Barta, RMIC, 15 February 1945, Folder, "Palawan POW Camp," Box 5, Entry 10, RG 24, NARA, College Park, MD (hereafter "Barta Statement"), 1.
- 12 McDole Interview; Nielsen Interview; Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 163-69.
- 13 McDole Interview; Nielsen Interview; Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 165-69, 173-240.
- 14 Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 251.
- 15 Bogue Statement, 2; Statement of Sergeant William J. Balchus, Staff Sergeant Edwin A. Petry, Corporal Eugene Nielsen, and Sergeant Alberto D. Pacheco, Document No. 8258, Washington, DC, 17 February 1945, Folder, "Palawan Massacre"; Box 2, Entry 3, RG 125, NARA, College Park, MD (hereafter "Balchus, et. al. Statement"), 1.
- 16 Barta Statement, 1-3; Balchus, et. al. Statement, 2; Bogue Statement, 2.
- 17 Memorandum, "Subj: Naval Casualties at Japanese Prison Camp, Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island, undated, Enclosure (A), "Eugene Nielsen," Folder, "Palawan POW Camp," Box 5, Entry 10, RG 24, NARA, College Park, MD, 1.
- 18 General Staff, comp., *Reports of General MacArthur, Vol. 1: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific* (Facsimile printing: 1994; Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966), 328-33.
- 19 Stephen J. Lofgren, *Southern Philippines, The Campaigns of World War Two: A World War Two Commemorative Series* (Washington, DC: GPO), 10-11. In the Army's official history of the battle (see previous cite), it notes that the last few survivors of the massacre linked up with American troops soon after the landing. Not being under the same restrictions to telling their story that the previous rescued survivors were, these men freely passed on details of their ordeal, "which only hardened American resolve to end Japanese rule over the island" (Lofgren, *Southern Philippines*, 10). That zeal may account for the unbalanced number of casualties from the Palawan operation: American forces had 12 KIA, 56 WIA, while the Japanese lost more than 900 killed – about one half of all their troops stationed on the island.
- 20 Moore, *As Good as Dead*, 276-278.
- 21 As the horrific details of the Palawan Massacre became more widely known due to publication of eyewitness testimonies of the survivors, commanders became sensitized to the situation and took steps to rescue victims of Japanese maltreatment.
- 22 The successful Cabanatuan rescue in January 1945 spurred similar missions in quick succession. Commanders within both the Sixth U.S. Army and Eighth U.S. Army directed rescue missions to free U.S. and Allied POWs and detainees from Japanese reprisals.



SHOOT & SALUTE

U.S. Army Special Warfare in Laos

by Jared M. Tracy



“IT THUS APPEARS TO US HERE AN
INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION THAT WE MUST
NOT TERMINATE OUR EFFORTS IN LAOS . . . ”¹

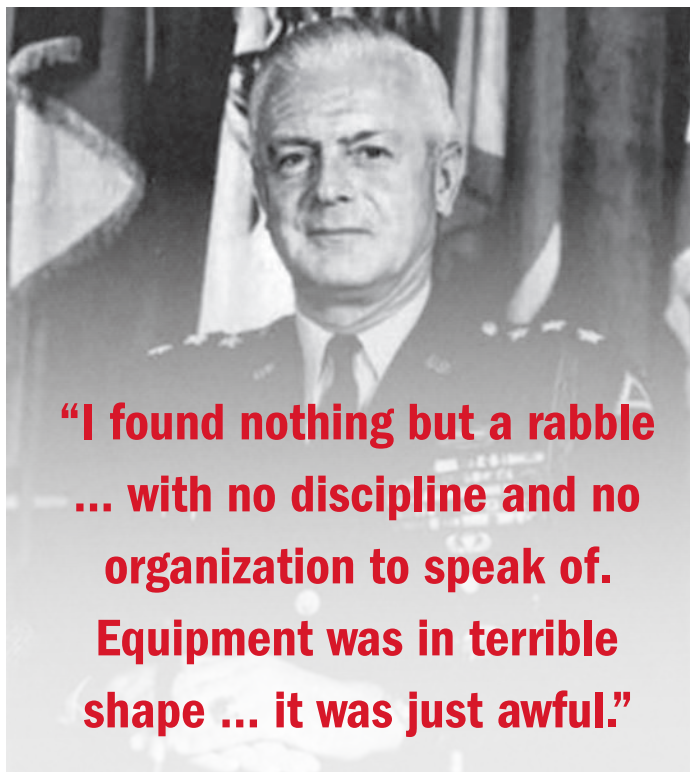
U.S. Embassy in Laos, November 1957

In October 1958, Brigadier General (BG) John A. Heintges was nearing the end of his tour as Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Infantry Training Center, at Fort Dix, NJ, and preparing for transfer to Korea when he received a call from the Pentagon. His orders to Korea were cancelled, the person said. “Well, where am I going?” Heintges inquired. Refused an over-the-phone answer due to classification, he was told to report to Rear Admiral (RADM) Edward O’Donnell, Director, Far East Section of International Security, Department of Defense (DoD).²

The following day, O’Donnell told the baffled general to go to Laos, a land-locked Southeast Asian (SEA) country formed from the former French colony of Indochina. Bordered by Burma, China, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV, ‘North Vietnam’), the Republic of Vietnam (RVN, ‘South Vietnam’), Cambodia, and Thailand, Laos had a population of around two million, half of whom were ethnic Lao, with the other half comprised of heterogeneous tribal groups.³ In Laos, Heintges would replace BG Rothwell H. Brown as head of the Programs Evaluation Office (PEO), a small, secretive DoD staff agency located in the Laotian capital, Vientiane. The Chief, PEO, represented the military on the U.S. Embassy Country Team.⁴ Established in 1955, the PEO channeled arms and equipment to the Royal Lao Government to help it combat both internal and external Communist threats, chiefly the Pathet Lao.⁵

Laos represented a diplomatic challenge for American political leaders. While the U.S. recognized Laotian sovereignty and neutrality, it also followed the Cold War foreign policy of ‘containment,’ or preventing the spread of Communism. Located in the ‘heart’ of SEA, Laos could not be allowed to ‘fall’ to Communism like China did in 1949 or like the Republic of Korea nearly did in 1950. Committed to cost-efficiency, President Dwight D. Eisenhower leaned heavily on diplomacy, nuclear deterrence, and covert operations in foreign policy. While he ruled out open military intervention in Laos, he would also not stand by and ‘do nothing.’

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the PEO, in concert with State Department and U.S. Information Agency (USIA) efforts, deployed non-uniformed advisors to provide clandestine training, logistical support, and funding to the Laotian government.⁶ Accordingly, Heintges was about to become the ‘civilian’ head of the PEO, answerable to Horace H. Smith, U.S. Ambassador to Laos,



As PEO commander, then-BG John A. Heintges devised the “Shoot and Salute” plan to use U.S. Army Special Forces to train the Laotian military.

and Admiral (ADM) Harry D. Felt, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM). Heintges’ rank in Laos would simply be ‘Mr.’⁷

Heintges knew little to nothing about his new location; his ‘comfort zone’ was in Europe. He had commanded 3/7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division during World War II; attended Heidelberg University in 1946–1947; served as Chief, Advance Plans and Training Section, U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR), in 1954–1955; and headed the Operations and Training Branch, Army Section, U.S. Military Assistance Group, in Germany, followed by the Army Section itself, in 1955–1957. He therefore did a 45-day survey of Laos, primarily to evaluate the military, before assuming command of the PEO.

He was disgusted with what he found. “I found nothing but a rabble in half military uniform and half civilian clothes, with no discipline and no organization to speak of.

Equipment was in terrible shape and there were no signs that any of our materiel we sent there was being properly maintained. The guns were rusty, the vehicles were in bad shape [with a] shortage of gasoline and so forth; it was just awful." During the colonial period, the French had filled officer and noncommissioned officer (NCO) positions in the Laotian military. Their mass departure had left a leadership vacuum, which in turn contributed to the further deterioration of the Laotian armed forces. (While some 1,500–2,000 French military advisors remained in Laos after independence, their effort was halfhearted, and "the Laotians paid no attention to them.")⁸

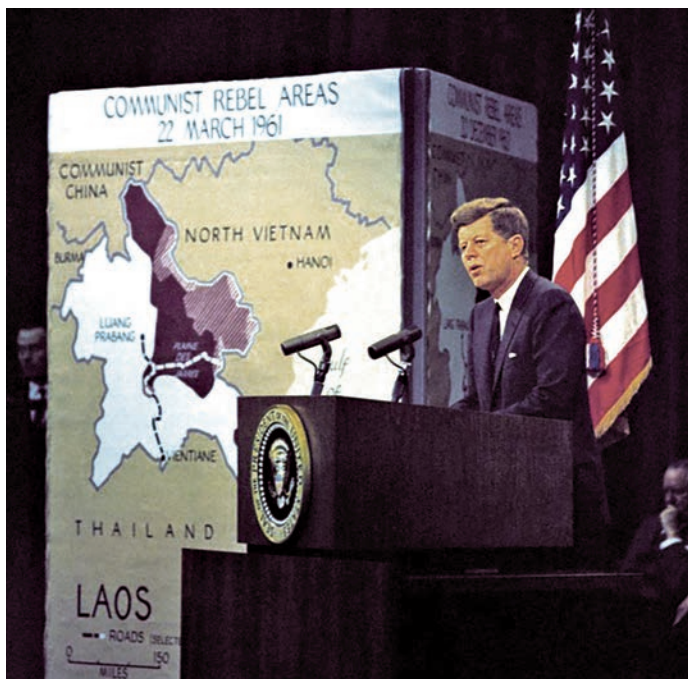


Non-uniformed U.S. personnel train Laotians in combat lifesaving techniques.

After completing his survey in December 1958, Heintges penned the "Shoot and Salute" plan to instill discipline and basic military proficiency in the Laotian military. This plan formed the basis for seven U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) rotations from July 1959 to October 1962. These SF soldiers came from the 77th, 7th, and 1st SF Groups (SFGs). As part of Project HOTFOOT, non-uniformed SF teams supported the PEO from July 1959 until April 1961, when newly inaugurated President John F. Kennedy replaced the PEO with the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Laos (MAAG Laos). At that point, U.S. soldiers donned uniforms in support of Operation WHITE STAR. The U.S. advisory role in Laos (both CIA and SF) is fairly well documented.⁹ However, the January 1961 introduction of a twelve-man psychological warfare (psywar) team from the 1st Psywar Battalion (Broadcasting and Leaflet [B&L]), at Fort Bragg, NC, is not. Psywar support to counterinsurgency (COIN) in Laos is addressed in a future article.

This article sets the stage for U.S. Army Special Warfare in Laos, and lays the groundwork for an article on the psywar effort in the next issue of *Veritas*. First, a short history of Laotian governance, followed by major developments in U.S.-Laos relations, provides the broad context. Second, it details how the U.S. got drawn deeper into Laos by an armed coup launched by 'neutralist' Captain (CPT) Kong Le and his American-trained 2nd Parachute Battalion in August 1960. Ensuing U.S. support of anti-Communist Prime Minister Boun Oum and defense minister General (GEN) Phoumi Nosavan put the U.S. at odds with most of the international community, including allies, who recognized Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister.

Third, this historical account chronicles the path toward creating MAAG Laos in April 1961. President Eisenhower (1953–1961) declined to activate a MAAG, preferring instead to keep the operation 'under wraps' and in CIA hands. However, the CPT Kong Le coup (coupled with the unrelated, abortive, CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs Invasion of Cuba in April 1961) forced the issue, and paved the way for overt U.S. military involvement in Laos. The formal training and advisory mission of MAAG Laos (WHITE



Left

President Dwight D. Eisenhower opted to keep a low profile in Laos, allowing the CIA and non-uniformed SF to handle the training and advisory mission.

Right

President John F. Kennedy offers an update on Laos at a 23 March 1961 press conference. Within a month, he approved the formal establishment of MAAG Laos.

STAR) supported President John F. Kennedy's (1961–1963) flexible response strategy, in which U.S. Army Special Warfare (COIN, psywar, and Unconventional Warfare [UW]) could be employed to combat Communist-backed 'wars of national liberation.'

Finally, this article introduces U.S. Information Service (USIS) activities in Laos. In order to consolidate all overseas information activities under one agency, President Eisenhower established the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) in 1953 to oversee efforts of its deployed field offices (USIS). (Confusingly, USIA and USIS were two different names for the same organization; 'USIS' was simply the overseas version of 'USIA.') Aiming to promote Laotian support for the Royal Lao Government and counter Communist propaganda, USIS Laos began activities in 1954. As will be explained, USIS Laos encountered many difficulties, and it benefited greatly from 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L) augmentation starting in 1961. However, before explaining U.S. information and psywar activities, it is first necessary to provide some general background on Laos and the U.S. involvement there.

A Short History

Immediately following World War II, France resumed its colonial management of Indochina, but was resisted in Laos by the Communist Pathet Lao and in Vietnam by the Viet Minh. French colonial influence had eroded greatly by the early 1950s, but the *coup de grâce* was the Viet Minh's May 1954 defeat of French forces at Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam, near the Laotian border. Concluded in July 1954, the Geneva



Pathet Lao soldiers in combat during the Laotian Civil War.

(photo copyright of Osprey Publishing, originally in *The War in Laos 1960-75* [1989], used with permission.)

Conference formally created four new countries from the former French Indochina: North and South Vietnam (divided at the 17th Parallel, pending unification through national elections), Cambodia, and Laos.

Plagued by an externally supported Communist insurgency, Laos was not left to its own devices after independence. For starters, an ineffectual, troublesome French military advisory presence remained in the country. Second, various U.S. agencies, including the CIA, PEO, and USIS, were active inside Laos. Third, the Geneva-created International Control Commission (ICC), comprised of a Communist, a non-Communist, and a neutral country (Poland, Canada, and India, respectively), assumed responsibility for enforcing the Accords throughout SEA. And in September 1954, the U.S. and seven other nations formed the SEA Treaty Organization (SEATO) to help prevent the spread of Communism in that region.¹⁰ In essence, Laos was sovereign in name only.

Under the monarchy of King Sisavang Vong, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and subsequent ministers tried reconciling with the Communist Pathet Lao. In 1957, Souvanna and his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong, leader of the Pathet Lao, concluded the Vientiane Accords to begin integrating the Pathet Lao into the Laotian government and military. The newly recognized party *Neo Lao Hak Sat* (NLHS), representing the Pathet Lao, earned a significant number of seats in parliamentary elections held in May 1958. Claiming political assimilation had been achieved, the Royal Lao Government 'jumped the gun' and pressed the ICC to leave Laos.

Senior U.S. leaders interpreted these events "as proof that the Lao could not be relied upon . . . to establish a soft buffer against communist encroachment," according to historian Seth Jacobs. For example, CIA Director Allen W. Dulles warned Eisenhower that there was "a great deal to fear," while his brother, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, described the Royal Lao Government as "negligent, self-seeking, or worse."¹¹ Their recommended

solution was continued, if secretive, U.S. involvement. The CIA assessed that the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the DRV also opposed the ouster of the ICC, but for another reason: they wanted to keep using Poland to funnel guidance to the Pathet Lao.¹²

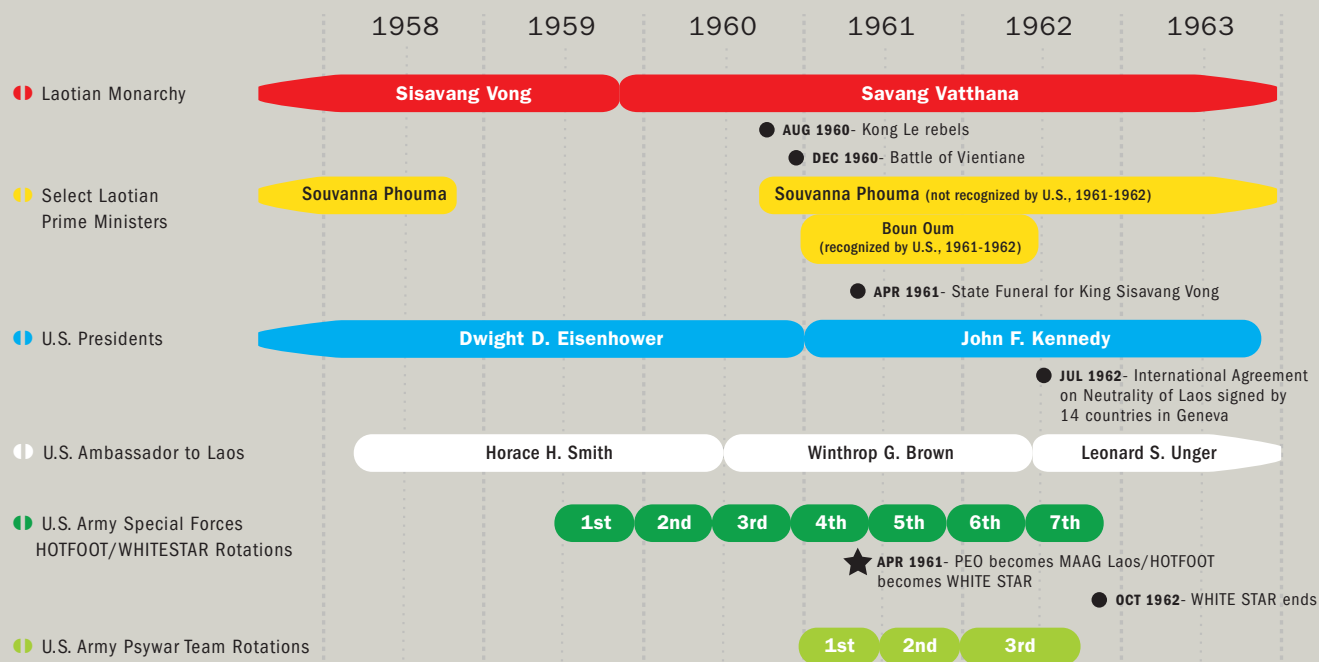
Political reconciliation in Laos was more of a fantasy than a reality. Communist integration into the Laotian military proved difficult. Efforts to bring two Pathet Lao battalions into the army in May 1959 failed when they rebelled instead. (Subsequently, one battalion surrendered and the other fled to the DRV, along with the *NLHS*.) Believing the rebellion to be externally supported, the Royal Lao Government formally protested to the United Nations (UN) that the DRV was interfering in its internal affairs. A late 1959 UN investigation confirmed DRV involvement in Laos, but stopped short of accusing it of active military operations.¹³

Compounding the Communist threat were internal political shifts, to include the monarchy. In October 1959 King Sisavang Vong died, and the Western-leaning Savang Vatthana ascended to the throne. By early 1960, the political pendulum had swung in favor of the conservative nationalists, in part because of the departure of Prime Minister Souvanna from power in 1958, and in part because of a ‘bloodless coup’ by the anti-Communist GEN Phoumi Nosavan in 1959. However, hopes for stability proved short-lived. In August 1960 ‘neutralist’

CPT Kong Le and mutinous soldiers from the U.S.-trained 2nd Parachute Battalion overthrew then-Prime Minister Somsanith Vongkottrattana and seized much of the country, including the capital, Vientiane. Communist forces exploited the instability and launched offensives in tandem with Kong Le, who shrewdly re-installed Souvanna as Prime Minister.¹⁴

The CIA believed that Souvanna wanted to negotiate with the Pathet Lao for a ceasefire and a coalition government, even as Laotian forces and the Pathet Lao continued battling. Fearing an eventual Pathet Lao victory due to external support, GEN Phoumi-led reactionary elements fought to retake areas from CPT Kong Le, the Pathet Lao, and DRV forces, including the ‘royal capital,’ Luang Prabang. With U.S. and Thai support, Phoumi’s forces won the Battle of Vientiane (13–16 December 1960), and pushed the enemy back to the strategic *Plaine des Jarres* (‘Plain of Jars’) in northern Laos.¹⁵ There, the Soviets air-delivered food, oil, and materiel to the insurgents, against the protests of the Laotian and U.S. governments. A new government was formed under Prince Boun Oum, which King Savang and the national assembly recognized in January 1961. To complicate matters, most nations, including U.S. allies and the moribund ICC, publically complained that Souvanna Phouma—not Boun Oum or Phoumi Nosavan—was the rightful leader. This was the confused situation when the U.S. became more deeply involved.¹⁶

Key Players: HOTFOOT/WHITE STAR



*Dates depicted on chart are approximate, see article for more detail

LEADERS OF LAOS DURING THE CRISIS PERIOD,

1958–1963



King Sisavang Vong



King Savang Vatthana



Prince Souvanna Phouma

LIFE SPAN

- Born: 14 July 1885 (Luang Prabang)
- Died: 29 October 1959 (Luang Prabang)

- Born: 13 November 1907 (Luang Prabang)
- Died: unknown (late 1970s or early 1980s)

- Born: 7 October 1901 (Luang Prabang)
- Died: 10 January 1984 (Vientiane)

YEARS IN POWER

- King: 1905–59 (minus break in 1945–46)

- Prime Minister: 1951
- King: 1959–75

- Prime Minister: 1951–54, 1956–58, 1960, & 1962–75

POLITICAL ORIENTATION

- Pro-French
- Opposed hardline Laotian nationalists

- Independent
- Western-leaning

- Neutralist
- Left-leaning

NOTABLE FACTS

- Ruled Kingdom of Luang Prabang during French colonial period and Japanese occupation
- King of Laos during early independence

- Tried but failed to create coalition government
- Abdicated throne in 1975 due to Pathet Lao victory, ending the monarchy
- Sent to re-education camp
- Final fate uncertain

- Half-brother to Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong
- Re-installed as PM during 1960 Kong Le rebellion
- Recognized by most countries (not U.S.) as true government leader, 1961–62

Post-independence (1954) Laotian politics was a tangled web of diverse loyalties, competing ambitions, dynamic personalities, familial conflicts, external pressures, and ‘palace intrigue.’ As much as the U.S. tried to reduce the situation to a simple ‘Communism versus anti-Communism’ scenario, the reality was far more complex. While the U.S., France, the Soviet Union, and other nations often regarded Laotian rulers as exploitable political-diplomatic amateurs, those rulers played would-be benefactors against each other for their nation’s (and personal) gain. This chart provides readers with a ‘cheat sheet’ of key Laotian leaders during the period addressed in this article.



Prince Boun Oum

- Born: 12 December 1911 (Champasak)
- Died: 17 March 1980 (Boulogne-Billancourt, France)

- Prime Minister: 1948-50, 1961-62

- Pro-French
- Royalist
- Anti-Communist

- Recognized by U.S. and monarchy as true head of government, 1961-62
- Left Laos for France just before 1975 Communist takeover, never returning



Prince Souphanouvong

- Born: 13 July 1909 (Luang Prabang)
- Died: 9 January 1995 (Vientiane)

- Pathet Lao leader: 1950-75
- 1st President, Lao People's Democratic Republic: 1975-91

- Anti-French
- Communist

- Half-brother to Prince Souvanna Phouma
- Supported anti-French/Communist aims in Indochina
- Technically president from 1975-91, but stepped down from power in 1986 for health reasons



GEN Phoumi Nosavan

- Born: 27 January 1920 (Savannakhet)
- Died: 3 November 1985 (Bangkok, Thailand)

- Defense Minister and de facto Prime Minister of Laos: 1961-62

- Anti-French
- Anti-Communist

- Chief of Staff of the Royal Lao Army starting in 1955
- Led a bloodless coup in 1959, but ousted during 1960 Kong Le rebellion
- Helped ‘roll back’ Kong Le in 1960
- Regarded as key ally by U.S.
- After several coup attempts in 1960s, fled to Thailand, dying in 1985



CPT Kong Le

- Born: 6 March 1934 (unknown, Laos)
- Died: 17 January 2014 (Paris, France)

- Royal Lao Army officer: 1951-66

- Neutralist
- Royalist
- Political opportunist

- Commanded elite 2nd Parachute Battalion
- Supported Phoumi's 1959 bloodless coup before launching his own coup in 1960
- Aligned with both Communists and royalists in bids to consolidate power
- Left Laos in 1966
- Lived abroad until his death in 2014



SF soldiers train Royal Lao Army personnel on basic marksmanship using Thompson submachine guns.



LTC Arthur D. 'Bull' Simons commanded the first 77th SFG contingent to deploy in support of Project HOTFOOT.

Drawn In Deeper

With full diplomatic relations with Laos established in 1955, U.S. Ambassadors (AMB) to Laos carefully balanced objectives as the U.S. tried to honor the Geneva Accords while supporting the Laotian Government and the 25,000 soldiers in the Laotian military.¹⁷ To avoid the appearance of unilateral action, the U.S. also bolstered its relationship with Laos's neighbor, Thailand, a fellow SEATO member. The U.S. had established MAAG Thailand in September 1950, which was replaced with the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, Thailand (JUSMAGTHAI) on 22 September 1953. In the late 1950s, USPACOM and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) mandated a close relationship between JUSMAGTHAI and the PEO to facilitate Thai-Lao defense planning. Thailand proved critical as a logistics feeder to Laos in support of military actions against CPT Kong Le in 1960 and beyond.¹⁸

Throughout its existence, the PEO had proven incapable of shaping events in Laos because of several flaws. First, as a DoD agency, its presence essentially violated the Geneva Accords, which prohibited outside military involvement in neutral Laos. The public image of the PEO as civilian-staffed was disingenuous since it was comprised primarily of non-uniformed active duty personnel or administratively 'retired' soldiers. Even Heintges called it a "[MAAG] in civilian clothes."¹⁹ Second, as a staff element of only thirty to fifty people (not counting SF teams starting in mid-1959), the PEO was too small to handle its country-wide responsibilities. For example, in June 1957, the Embassy argued that the PEO could have identified waste and abuse of U.S. funds by Laotian forces sooner "if [it] had been adequately staffed."²⁰

The Path To A MAAG

While Eisenhower preferred to keep a low profile in Laos, some civilian and military leaders in the U.S. preferred the idea of a formal MAAG instead of the secretive PEO. For example, in response to the May 1958 Communist electoral victories, AMB Horace H. Smith offered three options: (1) increase PEO staffing; (2) assign uniformed military personnel on a temporary basis; or (3) replace the PEO with a MAAG. Commander-in-Chief, USPACOM (CINCPAC), ADM Felix B. Stump, supported the third option. However, policymakers in Washington 'kicked the can down the road' and opted to simply 'hire' more 'civilians' for the PEO.²¹ While a MAAG was still years away, Heintges paved the way for greater U.S. involvement in Laos during his two-year tenure (January 1959 to January 1961). His "Shoot and Salute" plan evolved from a concept he and his French military counterparts developed: France would provide *tactical* training to Laotian forces while non-uniformed U.S. SF would equip and provide *technical* training.²² Heintges pushed his plan through USPACOM, which issued the formal request for forces.²³

Because the "Shoot and Salute" plan conformed to prevailing attitudes about military assistance, policymakers agreed to deploy non-uniformed SF soldiers to support COIN in Laos. In July 1959, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Arthur D. 'Bull' Simons and 100 plus soldiers from the 77th SFG deployed as the first rotation of Project HOTFOOT. The PEO scattered SF teams throughout Laos's five Military Regions (MR): MR I centered on Luang Prabang; MR II on Long Tieng; MR III on Savannakhet; MR IV on Pakse; and MR V on Vientiane. However, U.S. presence in MR II in the northeast was limited because it was largely Communist-controlled and the threat was greater.²⁴ Despite assuring the French that the U.S. would only conduct technical training, Heintges later admitted that SF had done some "clandestine tactical training."²⁵

The low-key SF training mission was fairly straightforward until the CPT Kong Le rebellion, which renewed questions about the level and type of U.S. involvement in Laos.²⁶ In response to the insurgency, the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) approved five recommendations on 12 August



Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates, Jr., argued in policy meetings that the U.S. was “losing the propaganda war” in Laos.

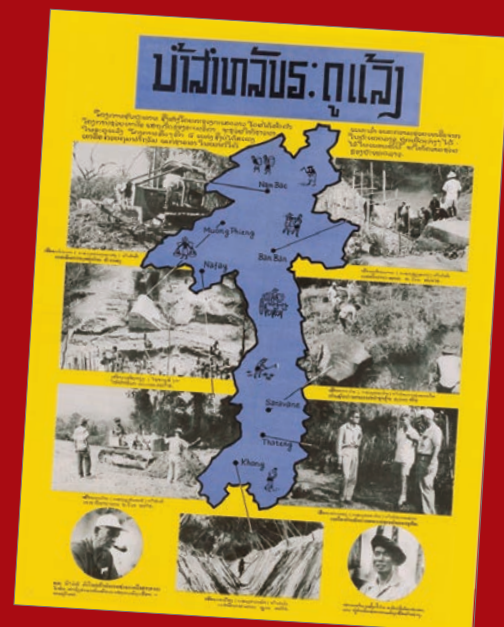
1960: (1) the PEO would send two officers to Luang Prabang and Savannakhet to support loyal Laotian commanders; (2) DoD would ensure direct communications between those officers and JUSMAGTHAI; (3) equipment and logistical support would be provided to Laotian forces using Thai assets “on a reimbursable basis”; (4) Civil Air Transport (CAT, affiliated with the CIA-operated Air America) would increase aerial support to Lao forces; and (5) the U.S. would put a radio transmitter in Thailand for clandestine pro-government radio broadcasting.²⁷

The rules of engagement for U.S. and Thai forces remained restrictive during and after the insurrection. For example, Thailand could provide logistical support, but cross-border operations were a last resort. Likewise, using Thai or U.S. military planes (other than those already approved for use by CAT, the PEO, and the Embassy) required presidential approval. Even if approved, they were not to be easily identifiable. Finally, U.S. troops could not accompany Laotian forces in combat at the battalion level or below.²⁸ In January 1961, Eisenhower permitted the use of C-47 *Skytrains* for photo reconnaissance and T-6 *Texans* for all operations except bombing.²⁹ In February, newly inaugurated President John F. Kennedy expanded Thailand-based C-130 aerial resupply operations to support the Laotian Government.³⁰ Senior officials repeated their calls to elevate the PEO to a MAAG, and found a more receptive audience with the new Administration.

Meanwhile, during senior-level discussions about the military role in Laos, Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates, Jr., stated that the U.S. was “losing the propaganda war.” The Communists were convincingly portraying the U.S. as obstructing peace and neutrality in Laos (while downplaying their own efforts to do so).³¹ Swaying international opinion was U.S. diplomacy business, but influencing public opinion inside Laos was tasked to two agencies: the USIA and, starting in early 1961, the U.S. Army 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L), under the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, NC.



1950s-era USIS leaflets in Laos stressed national unity, government legitimacy, public health and welfare, and U.S. support to Laos.



The need for pro-Royal Lao Government/anti-Communist propaganda was recognized soon after Laotian independence. At that time, Souvanna announced an aggressive civic action program largely in response to Pathet Lao “political subversion and propaganda in provinces.” The emphasis was in Sam Neua and Phong Saly in northeastern Laos. The State Department feared that Communist propaganda would “continue and undoubtedly grow in intensity.”³² For example, during CPT Kong Le’s 1960 uprising, Pathet Lao Radio and TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) broadcasted against GEN Phoumi.³³ The U.S. had limited success in countering Communist propaganda inside and outside of Laos. This was due in part to self-imposed political and diplomatic restrictions, as well as the language-cultural barrier, dispersion, and rural character of the Laotian people.³⁴

USIS Introduced

Since 1954, USIA had singularly handled overt informational activities in Laos, until it was supplemented by an Army psywar augmentation team in 1961. Established on 1 August 1953, USIA consolidated all foreign information activities, including the Voice of America (VOA), under one agency. USIA administered overseas information programs executed by its field offices, known as the U.S. Information Service (USIS).³⁵ USIS Laos had two main objectives: improve the credibility of the Laotian government in the eyes of the population, and counter-Communist propaganda. In the late-1950s and early-1960s, USIS employed the following media and programs: radio, printed products, films, an information center and library in Vientiane, formal presentations, an English teaching program, cultural exchanges, and personal contacts.³⁶

“Messages of support were only as good as security for the province.”

— James D. McHale

A USIS Laos inspection report (March 1960) revealed challenges with each approach. For example, with radio, there was only “one very weak local radio station” in 1956; even after that number grew to two 1 kilowatt (kw) shortwave transmitters and one 5 kw medium wave transmitter by 1960, transmissions did not adequately cover the entire country. In an attempt to boost access to the population, the U.S. government provided two 10 kw transmitters and a thousand radio public address systems

to the Laotian military to distribute to villages across the country. These systems would augment the estimated 14,000 individually owned radio receiver sets in Laos.³⁷

Determining how many transmitters were needed, where to place them, where to distribute receivers, and what kind of programming the stations would broadcast was based heavily on languages spoken by listening audiences. Since less than one percent of potential listeners spoke English, it was impractical for USIS Laos to simply replay VOA or other English-language broadcasts. Similarly, French was spoken only by educated elites. This left Lao as the primary programming language, even though much of the population spoke a myriad of local dialects.

The Laotian military had ‘seeded’ areas where Lao was commonly spoken with small U.S.-provided radio receivers. In places where Lao was not dominant, receivers were distributed to those few villagers who *did* speak Lao, usually local leaders, who could relay programming content to their constituencies. Some villages attached receivers to loudspeakers in the village square, which could be heard by passersby trading, shopping, or dining.³⁸ Individually owned receivers by non-Lao speakers were considered luxury items, and were primarily tuned to music stations.

The USIS Laos Motion Picture and Press and Publications Sections had their own challenges. These ranged from personnel, resourcing, and budgetary shortages; a fifteen percent literacy rate among the population; villagers’ inability to understand English, Lao, and French-language films; and terrain and climate (which hindered the transport of and caused damage to cameras, projectors, and other motion picture equipment).³⁹ The experience of several USIS officers mentioned below reveals the difficulties in trying to win popular support for the Royal Lao Government while countering the Communists.

Yale Richmond was among the first to serve in Laos. He quickly grasped the challenges: “Our major problem was that . . . the Lao people did not know they had an independent state, a federal government, and a King. Our job was nation building from the ground up.” Richmond and USIS Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Ted M.G. Tanen “published a Lao-language edition of USIA’s monthly magazine, *Free World*, in a land which had never had a publication.” In addition, “We produced a monthly newsreel about . . . the government, the royal family, and U.S. assistance, which we showed in villages to people who had never seen a motion picture. It was a tough, tropical tour, with no running water, electricity, air conditioning, or medical care; hazardous air travel; and tropical diseases.”⁴⁰

Five years later, many of the same challenges remained. Retired Foreign Service Officer (FSO) James D. McHale was a USIS representative in northeastern Laos in November 1959. He remembered that Sam Neua was “infested” with Communist guerrillas. “Security was a small local Lao government garrison and Meo Montagnards guarding the hills around us . . . In six months my information structure included VOA broadcasts and Lao mobile

military and civil information teams carrying . . . a message of support from the King and promises of material support [to every village].”⁴¹

Like the State Department and the PEO, USIS Laos was caught off-guard when CPT Kong Le rebelled. As McHale recalled, “Messages of support were only as good as security for the province. Just nine months after my arrival a military coup [by Kong Le] in Vientiane, followed by a Hanoi-backed Pathet Lao communist invasion, ended [Sam Neua’s] short, independent existence.” Meanwhile, USIS member Ivan Klecka and his team “traveled with the Royal Lao Army as it chased CPT Kong Le and the Pathet Lao north toward Luang Prabang . . . We posted photos along the way, to show villagers how its government was committed to their safety and well-being. We worked with [non-governmental organizations] making sure vital supplies reached Lao mothers and children in the cold northern mountains, and that the villagers knew who their friends were.”⁴²

Several factors led to the decision to deploy a U.S. Army psywar team to Laos to support USIS. First was Laos’s downward spiral from a limited insurgency into an open civil war, with outside Communist support. Second, USIS argued that the DoD was better suited to working directly with the Laotian military. Finally, with an authorization of 15 Americans and 82 locals, USIS Laos personnel were spread thin across the various posts and sub-posts in Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Pakse, Savannakhet, and elsewhere. This personnel shortfall made it difficult to coordinate with the various U.S. and Laotian agencies to develop information campaigns and disseminate multimedia products across the country.⁴³

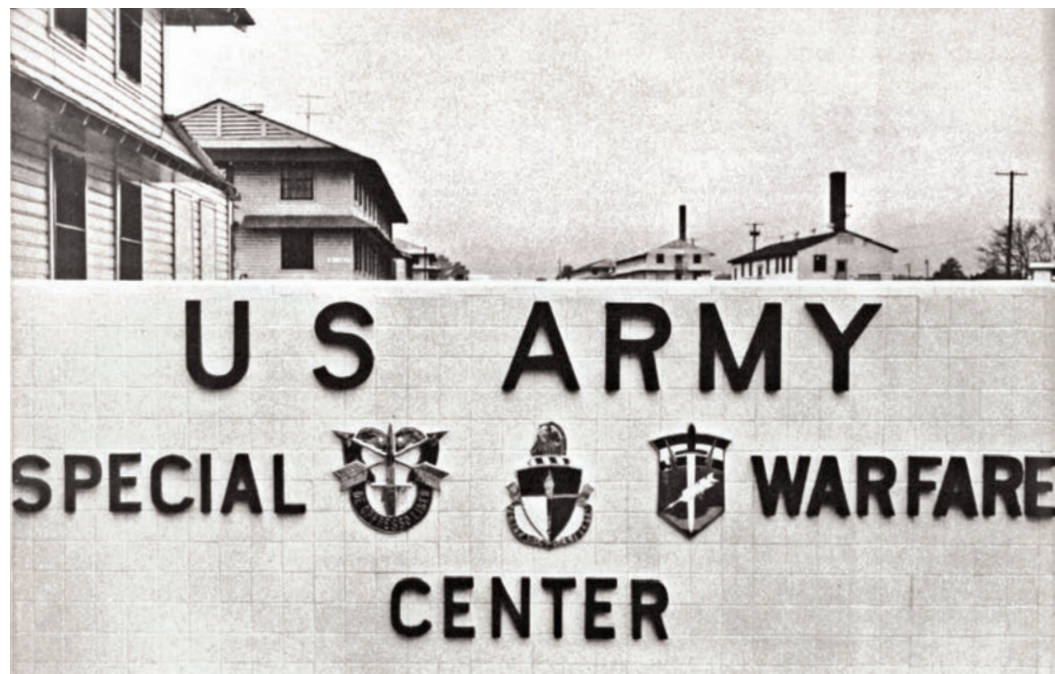
Deploying a psywar team to Laos coincided with Special Warfare doctrine and national-level policies governing overseas information activities. In the early

1960s, the U.S. Army understood Special Warfare as the confluence of UW, COIN, and psywar. Anti-Communist efforts in Laos represented COIN, as defined in *U.S. Army Special Warfare* (1962):

. . . all military, political, economic, psychological, and sociological activities directed toward preventing and suppressing resistance groups whose actions range in degree of violence and scope from subversive political activity to violent actions by large guerrilla elements to overthrow a duly established government. The basic military problem is to maintain or restore internal security . . .

Supporting COIN efforts, psywar entailed “activities and operations . . . to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of the enemy, the indigenous population, and neutral or friendly foreign groups [in order to] to support . . . national aims and objectives.”⁴⁴

National policies ‘drew the lines’ for U.S. interagency roles in overseas information activities. As previously discussed, USIA had primary responsibility outside of declared U.S. hostilities. The DoD was “to support the psychological operation of USIA in preinsurgent [*sic*] or [COIN] situations. The [DoD], in coordination with USIA and [USAID], also assists the host country in developing, equipping, and conducting psychological operations aimed at preventing or defeating subversive insurgency.” In all cases, “care must be exercised to avoid undercutting the host nation or implying that the [U.S.] is acting because its beleaguered ally is unable or unwilling to accomplish what U.S. forces [can].”⁴⁵ In sum, despite political reluctance to get too militarily involved, several factors made it feasible to introduce U.S. Army psywar soldiers into Laos: USIS’ need for ‘backup’ in Laos; contemporary U.S. Army Special



This was the welcoming sign to the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center. The insignias from left to right represent Special Forces, the Special Warfare Center, and the 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L).

Warfare doctrine; and national policies governing overseas information activities.

This article has provided context for understanding the role of U.S. Army psywar in Laos in the early 1960s. First, it provided a brief history of Laotian governance and U.S.-Laos relations. Second, it detailed the August 1960 armed coup by 'neutralist' CPT Kong Le and how that drew the U.S. even further into the chaotic situation in Laos. Third, this article described the long and winding path to establishing an overt U.S. military presence (MAAG Laos) in April 1961. Finally, it provided a background of U.S. information activities in Laos via the USIS, and the challenges it faced in its 'hearts and minds' campaign, dating to the mid-1950s.

In the summer of 1960, twelve unsuspecting soldiers of the 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L), U.S. Army Special Warfare Center, at Fort Bragg, NC, were given a sensitive overseas assignment. Many were young and new to the military, and none of them knew what to expect. They were as bewildered as BG Heintges had been two years earlier when the Pentagon sent him to the PEO in Laos. Based on his initial survey, Heintges had developed a plan for U.S. Army Special Forces to provide 'Shoot and Salute' training to Laotian armed forces in their fight against the Communists. However, the introduction of a psywar augmentation team in early 1961 proved there was more to the American military effort in Laos than 'Shoot and Salute' training. The activities of these 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L) soldiers in Laos is the focus of a follow-up article in the next issue of *Veritas*. 📌

JARED M. TRACY, PhD

Jared M. Tracy served six years in the U.S. Army, and became a historian at USASOC in December 2010. He earned an MA in History from Virginia Commonwealth University and a PhD in History from Kansas State University. His research is focused on the history of U.S. Army Psychological Operations.

Endnotes

- Document (Doc.) 505: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 15 November 1957, in *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Volume XXI*, online at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>, accessed 20 April 2017. Hereafter, *FRUS* documents will be cited by number, title, date, and *FRUS* volume (vol.); all were accessed on the Office of the Historian, Department of State website.
- LTG John A. Heintges, interview with MAJ Jack A. Pellicci, 1974, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 494, hereafter "Heintges interview" with page number.
- USIA, "Inspection Report: USIS Laos," 31 March 1960, 4-5, in Folder "Laos, April 19, 1960; February 6-17, 1956," Record Group (RG) 306: Records of the U.S. Information Agency, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), hereafter "USIA Inspection Report" with page number; CIA, "Background Notes on Laos," 16 January 1961, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/home>, accessed 17 April 2017. Unless otherwise noted, all CIA documents were accessed on the CIA Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Reading Room website.
- Its membership consisting of leaders from agencies deemed necessary by the Ambassador (e.g., MAAG, USIA, USAID, etc.), a country team "functions within the country to which it is accredited and focuses its attention on furthering the aims of U.S. policy and providing the country with requested advice and assistance." Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 33-5: *Psychological Operations Techniques and Procedures* (Washington, DC, 1966), 3.
- Doc. 339: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 3 February 1956; Doc. 341: "Memorandum from the Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs," 4 February 1956; Doc. 343: "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos," 9 February 1956; Doc. 464: "Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee to the JCS," 8 August 1957; Doc. 389: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 26 October 1956, all in *FRUS, 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XXI*.
- The Geneva Accords and Laos's status as an independent, neutral nation presented an ongoing challenge for the U.S. in its ability to provide direct support. In addition, the U.S. perceived a feeling of ingratitude from and contention with the Royal Lao Government for its support, as evidenced by the 26 October 1956 State Department statement, "[Military funding] is making U.S. support to Lao Army, which is indispensable to independence, a major issue between us." Moreover, the frequent conciliatory approach of the Royal Lao Government towards the Pathet Lao caused the U.S. to conclude on 15 November 1957 that it was "aiding [the Communists] more than [the] free world." For documents pertaining to U.S. aid to Laos and its impact on U.S.-Laos relations, see, for example, Doc. 376: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 23 August 1956; Doc. 389: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 26 October 1956; and Doc. 505: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 15 November 1957, all in *FRUS, 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XXI*.
- "Heintges interview," 495, 500, 502, 511, quotation from 500.
- "Heintges interview," 495-96, 498-99, 579-81, quotations from 495-96, 499.
- See, for example, Kenneth Conboy, *The War in Laos, 1960-1975* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1989); Kenneth Conboy, *Shadow War: The CIA's Secret War in Laos* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1995); Roger Warner, *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos* (South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 1996); and Seth Jacobs, *The Universe Unraveling: American Foreign Policy in Cold War Laos* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).
- "Background Notes on Laos"; Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938* (New York: Penguin Group, 1997 [8th ed.]), 138-39; Doc. 1: "Memorandum of Conversation with President Eisenhower," 2 January 1961, and Doc. 8, "Memorandum for the Record," 19 January 1961, both in *FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXIV, Laos Crisis. The other SEATO countries were the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, France, Thailand, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Despite U.S. hopes, SEATO would prove incapable of resolving the crisis in Laos.*
- Jacobs and Dulles quotations in Jacobs, *The Universe Unraveling*, 80-81.
- "Background Notes on Laos."
- "Background Notes on Laos." According to Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., *Undercover Armies: CIA and Surrogate Warfare in Laos, 1961-1975* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, 2006), 4, the "Laotian military was known as the *Forces Armées Laotiennes* (FAL), but after 1960, it came to be referred to as the *Forces Armées Royales* (FAR)." Ahern chose to only use FAR for consistency. To avoid confusion, this article will use more general terms like 'Laotian army' or 'royal armed forces'.
- "Background Notes on Laos."
- "Background Notes on Laos"; "Heintges interview," 542-45, 564-66, 576-79, 581-83; CIA, "SUBJECT: North Vietnamese Involvement in the Fighting in Laos," 7 January 1961. The Plain of Jars was, as its name implies, an area containing prehistoric jar-like archaeological relics.
- For U.S. support to Boun Oum and GEN Phoumi; international support of Souvanna; U.S. efforts for an international solution to Laos (except for the ICC), and the Soviet airlift of supplies, see, for example, Doc. 1: "Memorandum of Conversation with President Eisenhower," 2 January 1961; Doc. 2: "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 3 January 1961; Doc. 3: "Memorandum of Discussion at the 473rd Meeting of the NSC," 5 January 1961; Doc. 4: "Paper Prepared by the President's Assistant Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)," 9 January 1961, all in *FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXIV, Laos Crisis; CIA, Office of Current Intelligence, "SUBJECT: The Situation in Laos (as of 0800 EST)," 1 January 1961; CIA, "NSC Briefing," 5 January 1961.*
- State Department, "U.S. Relations with Laos," 13 December 2016, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2770.htm>, accessed 25 April 2017. The U.S. Ambassadors to Laos during this period were Charles W. Yost (1955-1956), J. Graham Parsons (1956-1958), Horace H. Smith (1958-1960), and Winthrop G. Brown (1960-1962).
- For more on the PEO as a mechanism for U.S. support to Laos, see, for example, Doc. 339: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 3 February 1956; Doc. 388: "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos," 20 October 1956; and Doc. 464: "Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee to the JCS," 8 August 1957, all in *FRUS, 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XXI*; description of MAAG Thailand and JUSMAGTHAI found on National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), "Record Group 472: Records of the United States Forces in Southeast Asia, 1950-1975," <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/472.html>, accessed 26 April 2017. The budget for U.S. military support to Laos totaled \$35.6 million in 1956 and \$20 million in 1957.
- "Heintges interview," 500. For more on 'civilianizing' Heintges and others for this assignment, see "Heintges interview," 517-518. In January 1961, much to the irritation of Heintges, the *New York Times* "blew the lid" on him and the secretive 'civilian' mission in Laos. Jack Raymond, "U.S. General Runs Quiet Laos Team," *New York Times*, 9 January 1961.
- Doc. 452: "Telegram from the Ambassador in Laos (Parsons) to the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Young)," 25 June 1957, in *FRUS, 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XXI*.
- Doc. 181: "Editorial Note," no date, in *FRUS, 1958-1960, East Asia-Pacific Region; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XVI*.
- "Heintges interview," 505-10, 516, 521-25, 528-29, quotations from 505, 521.
- Heintges' plan was timely, as U.S. policymakers were working to improve long-term Military Assistance Planning and mutual security operations plans for countries receiving U.S. assistance. At one National Security Council meeting, GEN Lyman L. Lemnitzer, U.S. Army Chief of Staff (1957-1960) and Chairman of the JCS (1960-1962),

argued that "training for military forces was . . . one of the most important things that we did . . . [O]ur plans should be worldwide in character and [we] should not let the needs of NATO detract from the needs of other areas of the world." Doc. 266: "Memorandum of Discussion at the 465th Meeting of the NSC," 31 October 1960, in *FRUS, 1958-1960, Foreign Economic Policy, Vol. IV*.

- 24 See, generally, Stephen Sherman, *Who's Who from HOTFOOT/WHITE STAR* (Houston, TX: Radix Press, 1994).
- 25 "Heintges interview," 524, 529. For more on the French 'halfhearted'—even obstructionist—approach to defending Laos, see, for example, Doc. 10: "Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Nitze) to Secretary of Defense McNamara," 23 January 1961, and Doc. 25: "Memorandum of Conference with President Kennedy," 9 March 1961, both in *FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXIV, Laos Crisis*.
- 26 "Heintges interview," 536-537, quotation from 536.
- 27 Doc. 357: "Editorial Note," no date, in *FRUS, 1958-1960, East Asia-Pacific Region; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XVI. CAT had its origins in post-WWII efforts to support Chinese Nationalists in their fight against the Communists*.
- 28 Doc. 489: "Telegram from the Delegation at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting to the Department of State," 25 December 1960, in *FRUS, 1958-1960, East Asia-Pacific Region; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XVI*.
- 29 Doc. 4: "Paper Prepared by the President's Assistant Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)," 9 January 1961, in *FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXIV, Laos Crisis*.
- 30 Doc. 14: "Summary Record of Meeting," 8 February 1961, in *FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXIV, Laos Crisis*. Despite expanding aerial resupply missions, U.S. planes carrying military supplies were still instructed to land in nearby Udorn in northern Thailand, rather than in Vientiane. Laotian and Thai forces would then move the supplies into Laos.
- 31 Doc. 6: "Memorandum of Conversation," 17 January 1961, in *FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXIV, Laos Crisis*. On the diplomatic side, the JCS and others continued to recommend that the U.S. seek SEATO support for its pro-Boun Oum/Phoumi approach; resist UN involvement and the reactivation of the ICC; and only pursue unilateral action as a last resort if SEATO fell through. For more on U.S. supporting an international solution to the problem as opposed to unilateral action, see, for example, Doc. 11: "Memorandum from Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Kennedy," 24 January 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXIV, Laos Crisis*.
- 32 The U.S. looked to support the Royal Lao Government in this civic action program, which would be handled by the National Council for Civic Action, consisting of a Commissioner (COL Oudon Sananikone) and representatives from several Royal Lao Government ministries (including Public Health and Urbanism, Public Works,

National Education, Agriculture, Finance, National Defense, and Interior). The key "action elements" would be the armed forces and mobile teams of technicians from the various ministries with the mission of putting "self-help program [in the provinces] in motion through [the] application [of] technical skill." The intent for the armed forces was to put one company of 100 men in each of the country's 56 districts to maintain security by cooperating with the population "through auto-defense and local assistance programs." Doc. 412: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 8 January 1957; and Doc. 424: "Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State," 13 February 1957, both in *FRUS, 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XXI*.

- 33 CIA, Office of Current Intelligence, "SUBJECT: The Situation in Laos (as of 0800 EST)," 1 January 1961; CIA, "NSC Briefing," 5 January 1961; Doc. 357: "Editorial Note," no date, in *FRUS, 1958-1960, East Asia-Pacific Region; Cambodia; Laos, Vol. XVI*. In an effort to counter the aggressive 'neutralist'/Communist propaganda in Laos during the CPT Kong Le rebellion, the NSC approved the furnishing of a radio transmitter to northern Thailand to use as a clandestine pro-Royal Lao Government/anti-Communist broadcasting station. There is little evidence of the effectiveness of such measures.
- 34 "USIA Inspection Report," 4-5.
- 35 Description of USIA found on NARA, "Record Group 306: Records of the U.S. Information Agency," <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/306.html>, accessed 16 May 2017.
- 36 "USIA Inspection Report," 2, 26-40.
- 37 "USIA Inspection Report," 26-28.
- 38 Email from Raymond P. Ambrozak to Jared M. Tracy, "SUBJECT: Re: Radio Station," 27 December 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 39 "USIA Inspection Report," 28-32.
- 40 USIA, "The United States Information Agency: A Commemoration," no date, 23, available for download at <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/>, accessed 16 May 2017.
- 41 USIA, "The United States Information Agency: A Commemoration," 23.
- 42 USIA, "The United States Information Agency: A Commemoration," 23, 29.
- 43 "USIA Inspection Report," 2, 16-19.
- 44 Office, Chief of Information, Department of the Army, *U.S. Army Special Warfare* (Washington, DC, 1962), 9. For more on *Special Warfare*, see Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).
- 45 FM 33-5: *Psychological Operations Techniques and Procedures* (1966), 9, 17.

President John F. Kennedy meeting with Souvanna Phouma on 22 July 1962.





Volare Optimos

Honoring the
Silent Professionals of
Special Operations Aviation

by Joshua D. Esposito



IAW USSOCOM Sanitization Protocol for Historical Articles on Current Operations, pseudonyms are used for majors and below who are still on active duty, unless names have been publicly released for awards/decorations or DoD news release. Pseudonyms are identified with an asterisk (*). Source references (end notes) utilize the assigned pseudonym.

Standing at the entrance to the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command (Airborne) (USASOAC) headquarters at Fort Bragg, NC, is a ten-foot tall, 2,500 pound bronze statue of a winged Centaur. Ares, the Greek god of war, is dismounting to engage in battle.¹ The monument is the culmination of years of design, approvals, engineering plans, and collaboration between a number of individuals.

The project had its origins in conversations between U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) senior leaders and James G. Shore, a renowned artist and sculptor. In 2012, Shore was among a group of individuals invited to a three-day demonstration of special operations forces. After the presentation, then-USASOC commander, Lieutenant General (LTG) John F. Mulholland, Jr., asked to meet with Shore to discuss the possibility of developing a small

The *Volare Optimos* statue stands in front of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command Headquarters at Fort Bragg, NC.



memento for soldiers completing special operations courses.² At LTG Mulholland's suggestion, Shore also met with Brigadier General (BG) Clayton M. Hutmacher, then the Commanding General (CG) of USASOAC, and received a briefing on special operations aviation.³ When LTG Mulholland changed command in July 2012, Shore anticipated that the idea would evaporate. BG Hutmacher, however, was interested in developing a larger statue for USASOAC, and worked with Shore to carry on the project.⁴ Having decided on a monument to special operations aviation, Shore asked to design and fund the statue. BG Hutmacher welcomed the offer, and charged USASOAC Command Chief Warrant Officer (CCWO) CW5 Robert D. Witzler with overseeing the project.⁵

Witzler brainstormed throughout March 2014, conveying his ideas to Shore, and the two developed the concept for the *Volare Optimos* statue. Shore was so excited about the project that he occasionally worked through the night to send charcoal sketches to Witzler after receiving suggestions. They soon agreed on a common concept.⁶

It was important to Shore and Witzler that the sculpture was replete with carefully chosen symbols. The centaur signifies the synergy of man and machine, while the drawn bow and disembarking warrior represent the assault and attack roles that are hallmarks of special operations aviation (SOA). The concept of unified air and ground forces is further represented in the harmony between the centaur and Ares, with both figures' eyes and weapons focused on the same target. The sculpture respects the "offensive nature of Army Special Operations Aviation," with the horse's reared legs and the forward lean of the warriors exhibiting frontward motion.⁷ As a testament to the ethos of the SOA community, aviators are not the primary character in the monument dedicated to honoring them—the winged centaur is silent, while Ares is screaming as he descends and engages the enemy. The monument is a tribute to the culture of SOA, and to the dedication and humility of the quiet professionals who realize that they exist to support ground-based 'customers.'⁸

Most of the time spent revising and finalizing the design was dedicated to fine-tuning the several subtle icons that quietly represent all of the 'clans' within SOA.⁹ This includes a piece emotionally significant to the regiment. When Shore suggested incorporating an emblem in the nocked arrow, Witzler worked with the Airborne and Special Operations Museum (ASOM) to attain a small piece of titanium from *Super 61*, one of the two MH-60L Black Hawks lost during the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993.¹⁰ Shaped like the Special Forces insignia, the arrowhead bears the inscription "People sleep peacefully in their beds at night only because rough men [and women] stand ready to do violence on their behalf."¹¹ Shore and former USASOAC CCWO Dennis N. Ireland* chose this quote because it was applicable to all special operations forces.¹² With the concept developed, Shore provided the American Bronze Foundry a clay model of the proposed statue.¹³

At the foundry, twenty artisans worked on the project for eight months. The statue went from a maquette to reality.



One of several charcoal sketches Artist Jim Shore created of the concept with USASOAC Command Chief Warrant Officer, Robert D. Witzler. (Photo courtesy of CW5 (Ret) Robert D. Witzler, with the permission of Mr. Jim Shore.)



The 2,500 pound, 10-foot-tall monument first took shape as a meticulously sculpted clay model (*maquette*) that stood about 12 inches in height. (Photo courtesy of American Bronze Foundry.)

"People sleep peacefully in their beds at night only because rough men [and women] stand ready to do violence on their behalf."

— The arrowhead inscription, paraphrased from novelist George Orwell



Top The Centaur's nocked arrow is forged from titanium recovered from a Blackhawk helicopter shot down in Mogadishu during Operation GOTHIC SERPENT in October 1993. One side is inscribed with Gothic Serpent dates and with units involved; the other with the paraphrased Orwell quote.

Bottom A side-view of Ares dismounting to engage in battle.





L-R Artist James G. Shore; Deputy G1, Chris Hopkins; USASOAC CO, BG John R. Evans; and USASOAC CCWO, Mark A. Meyer; after unveiling the *Volare Optimos* statue. (Photos Courtesy of the USASOAC Public Affairs Office.)



Brigadier General John R. Evans was the fourth Commanding General of USASOAC, from July 2016 to May 2018.

Initially, workers digitally scanned the mold, enlarged it, and then made a foam frame. Then they assembled it and applied clay for details. Due to its size, the mold was cut into about fifteen pieces before creating the shells, which were used to cast the bronze piece in separate castings. The elements were then welded together, and grinders smoothed the join marks. An application of chemicals created a “museum brown bronze” tone.¹⁴ Finally, artisans created highlights and shadows, before buffing and waxing the statue with sealant. With assembly complete, the statue was stored at the foundry for a year while the base was constructed, permission was granted by the Secretary of the Army, and a dedication ceremony was coordinated.

Cooperation between the Green Beret Foundation, the Directorate of Public Works at Fort Bragg, and the USASOAC engineers facilitated construction of the base, while CCWO Mark A. Meyer supervised progress.¹⁵ In September 2015, the Green Beret Foundation made a donation to construct the pedestal from local granite.¹⁶ The creators wanted it to be modest; the statue was the center of attraction. This was done in late-spring 2016.¹⁷

The statue’s base was installed in the spring of 2017, and preparations made for a dedication during Memorial Day week. Seven days before the ceremony, the statue was delivered to the USASOAC HQ at Fort Bragg. There,



(Images Courtesy of American Bronze Foundry.)

Foundry Process of the USASOAC Statue *Volare Optimos*

- 1 Foam is applied to the pieces of the statue after the maquette was digitally scanned and scaled to ten feet.
- 2 The molded statue parts are assembled together.
- 3 Clay detailing is added before the bronze casting.
- 4 Due to its size, the statue is disassembled before bronze casting.
- 5 The bronze sections are welded together after casting.
- 6 A chemical treatment is applied to create the statue's "museum brown bronze" color.

it was lifted by crane onto the base.¹⁸ Shore then installed bollards connected by a chain to accentuate the site, leaving an opening on each end so soldiers can observe the statue up-close.¹⁹ Three years of collaboration between dozens of individuals culminated when BG John R. Evans, Jr. officially dedicated the statue on 23 May 2017.

Federal law defines the sculpture and base as non-revocable donations of time, labor, and money furnished as a gift to the U.S. Army. In his remarks at the dedication, however, Jim Shore emphasized that he did not view the statue as something given free of cost, but as a small return on the payment for the daily sacrifices made by the men, women, and families of the special operations community.²⁰ The *Volare Optimos* statue ‘stands guard’ in front of the USASOAC headquarters as a reminder of the spirit of special operations aviators, and that Americans appreciate their devotion to the nation. ▲

JOSHUA D. ESPOSITO, PhD

Joshua D. Esposito served four years in the U.S. Navy before earning an MA and PhD in Diplomatic History from West Virginia University. He was a historian at U.S. Southern Command for two years prior to joining the USASOC History Office in July 2017. His current research is focused on Special Operations Aviation.

Endnotes

- 1 Details about the height and weight of the *Volare Optimos* statue were provided by Shawn Ganim, project manager at American Bronze Foundry. See: Project Manager, American Bronze Foundry, Shawn Ganim, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 2 November 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. Email from Shawn Ganim, Project Manager, American Bronze Foundry to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 2 November 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. The explanation of symbolism embedded in the statue was provided by former USASOAC Command Chief Warrant Officer (CCWO) Robert D. Witzler. Retired CW5 Robert D. Witzler, interview by Esposito, 21 September 2017, USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. Robert D. Witzler, “Sculpture Brainstorming,” PowerPoint Slide Deck, undated, copy in USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by author and title.

- 2 Email from Robert D. Witzler to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 20 November 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by names and date.
- 3 MG Clayton M. Hutmacher, former Commander, USASOAC interview by Esposito, 9 November 2017, USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. Since that time, BG Hutmacher has been promoted to Major General.
- 4 Witzler to Esposito, 20 November 2017.
- 5 Witzler, 21 September 2017.
- 6 Witzler, 21 September 2017.
- 7 Witzler, “Sculpture Brainstorming,” quote from slide number one.
- 8 Witzler, 21 September 2017. CW5 Mark A. Meyer, CCWO, USASOAC, interview by Esposito, 22 September 2017, USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 9 Witzler, 21 September 2017; U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command (Airborne), “*Volare Optimos*” Statue Dedication Ceremony, 23 May 2017, PowerPoint, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by title and date.
- 10 Witzler, 21 September 2017.
- 11 The quote is attributed to novelist George Orwell, though the words “and women,” are not in the original quote.
- 12 “*Volare Optimos*” Statue Dedication Ceremony, 23 May 2017; CW5 Dennis N. Ireland*, former USASOAC CCWO, interview by Esposito, 24 October 2017, USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC
- 13 James G. Shore, remarks at “*Volare Optimos*” Statue Dedication Ceremony, 23 May 2017, hereafter cited by name and date; Ganim, 2 November 2017.
- 14 Ganim, 2 November 2017.
- 15 Email from James G. Shore to Robert D. Witzler, copied in Witzler to Esposito, 20 November 2017. Shore’s email to Witzler, generously made available in response to a question from the author, specifically referred to the three CCWOs as the “driving force that enabled the statue project to come to reality.”
- 16 Chairman of the Board, Green Beret Foundation (MG [Ret.] David A. Morris) letter to Commander, U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command (BG Erik C. Peterson), 15 September 2015, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Since that time, BG Peterson has been promoted to Major General. LTC Terry L. Stewart, USASOAC Engineer, interview by Esposito, 10 October 2017, USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 17 Stewart, 10 October 2017. Concurrently, engineers were working to divert groundwater from the front of the building, where the statue was to be placed. The groundwater issue was vital to assuring the aesthetic of the landscape on which the statue was placed. DPW completed installation of the crushed rock and a French drain in the fall 2016.
- 18 Ganim, 2 November 2017. Half-inch steel rods from the statue were set into epoxy-filled holes drilled in the granite to secure the bronze to the base.
- 19 Bollards are posts, connected by chains that surround the statue area. Email from Deputy Chief of Staff, ARSOAC, Patrick O’Hara III to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 2 November 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Shore, 23 May 2017.
- 20 Shore, 23 May 2017.

THE SPECIAL FORCES OPERATOR

By Charles H. Briscoe

1959



In the last fifteen to twenty years, the practice of calling a Special Forces (SF) soldier an 'operator' has caused considerable rancor within Army special mission units (SMU), the original of which adopted that appellation in the late 1970s. Today, all U.S. military service special operations forces and their higher headquarters apply that moniker to their sea, land, and air warfighters. Even staff personnel adopt that term for themselves. In the warfighter units this distinction clearly delineates and separates staff and support personnel from those assessed to undergo a mentally and physically tough selection course. Those that successfully achieve the rigorous standards must satisfy a leaders' board to qualify for advanced training that could lead to operational assignments. In some SMUs psychological, physical, and mental assessments and re-evaluations are constant, hence the phrase, 'Selection is an ongoing process.' Regardless of the rigor applied by Special Operations Forces (SOF) elements, feelings of rancor in the 'ranks' of Army SOF towards the popular use of 'operator' are unwarranted.

SF did not misappropriate the appellation. Unbeknownst to most members of the ARSOF community, that moniker was adopted by Special Forces in the mid to late 1950s. SF-qualified officers and enlisted soldiers voluntarily

subscribed to the provisions of the 'Code of the Special Forces Operator' and pledged themselves to its tenets by witnessed signature.

This document, signed by SF-qualified Infantry Captain (CPT) Albert V. 'Jake' Clement, an FA Team Leader [an Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) today] in 1st Company, 77th Special Forces Group (SFG), and witnessed by John J. Hanretty on 2 April 1959, substantiates original ownership. According to Provision 10 of the SF Operator Code, the signed certificate was to be filed in one's Official Military Personnel Records (OMPR). The original was found in the OMPR of retired Major (MAJ) 'Jake' Clement, second-in-command of the 10th SFG Congo Rescue Mission in 1960.¹

Cross-referencing sources is a standard practice of the USASOC History Office. It is critical to verify information in interviews, memoirs, and secondary source works. Primary documentation provides official, factual information to reinforce statements and/or disprove claims. Credibility is key to USASOC historical publications 'standing the test of time.' And, sometimes official records have surprises like the Special Forces Operator Code. It reinforced 'silent professionalism.' This document ought to stir memories of early SF veterans and reduce the angst among serving 'special operators.' ▲

ENDNOTE: 1 Retired MAJ Albert Valentine 'Jake' Clement, Official Military Personnel Record (OMPR), National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.



CODE FOR THE SPECIAL FORCES OPERATOR

I, ALBERT V. CLEMENT, Captain, a member of the US Army Special Forces, certify that:

1. I volunteered for duty with Special Forces, fully realizing that Special Forces teams will be deployed immediately on the outbreak of hostilities deep behind enemy lines to organize, train, and exploit guerrilla forces and to perform other missions as directed in the service of my country. I fully realize the hazards involved.

2. I know, as a member of the team, I must keep myself mentally and physically fit at all times and shoulder my full share of the tasks required of my team.

3. Once committed behind enemy lines, I will conduct myself at all times in such a way as to bring honor to my team, service and country.

4. I am aware that the mission of my team must be accomplished against all odds.

5. I will live up to the "Code of Conduct" for the American Fighting Man.

6. I realize it is my responsibility as a Special Forces Operator to undergo more intense and more rugged training than is required of the average soldier of the United States Army.

7. I understand that to carry out my mission, language and specialist training are required, and that attendance at such schools will be regarded as an opportunity for personal development. I will gladly accept such assignments and will apply myself to achieving the maximum instruction therefrom.

8. I understand that failure to achieve satisfactory progress in training, demonstration of poor judgement, immaturity or misconduct of such nature as to bring discredit on myself or Special Forces, will be proper cause for immediate reassignment and a permanent bar from future duty with the Special Forces.

9. It is my intention to remain in the Special Forces for a minimum of six years.

10. I have voluntarily subscribed to the provisions of this document and am aware that it will be made a part of my permanent records.

Ft Bragg, N.C.
(EXECUTED AT)

Albert V. Clement Capt d/f
(NAME)
John J. Hanretty
(OPERATIONAL LEADER-WITNESS)
2 April 59
(DATE)



Commander, USASOC
ATTN: AOHS (Veritas)
E-2929 Desert Storm Drive
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Future Veritas:

The next issue of Veritas will be another spectrum, covering multiple Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) branches and topics. It will include a follow-up to the Palawan Massacre article: a detailed account of the Prisoner-of-War (POW) rescue at Cabanatuan, Philippines, on 30 January 1945. This highly successful raid was carried out by ARSOF legacy units, 6th Ranger Battalion and Alamo Scouts, as well as indigenous forces, and resulted in the liberation of more than 500 U.S. and Allied personnel after years of brutal Japanese captivity. To this day, Cabanatuan remains a relevant model for direct action POW raids and an ARSOF success story.

Another feature will be a follow-up to the U.S. Army Special Warfare in Laos article. It focuses on the 1961 deployment of a twelve-man team from the 1st Psychological Warfare (Psywar) Battalion (Broadcasting and Leaflet), Fort Bragg, NC. Thrust into an ambiguous environment with little direction, this young team relied on their education, experience, and resourcefulness to build local, regional, and national psywar programs to unify the Laotian people and counter Pathet Lao propaganda.

